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THE COLLECTED WRITINGS

OF

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CONTENTS.

PAGE

CHURCH OFFICERS. 4
The Call of the Minister 15
The Ruling Elder 43
The Ruling Elder a Presbyter 115
Resolutions as to the Eldership 132
Presbyterianism and the Eldership 134

CHURCH OPERATIONS 143
Argument against Church Boards 145
Argument for Church Boards Answered 173
Debate touching Church Boards 217
Church Boards and Presbyterianism. 242

CHURCH DISCIPLINE 297
The Revised Book of Discipline 299
The Revised Book Vindicated 336

THE CHURCH AND SLAVERY 376
Relation of the Church to Slavery 381
The Christian Doctrine of Slavery 398

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 437
Reasons for Separate Organization 439
Address to all Churches of Christ. 446
Valedictory Letter to the Northern Church 465

THE CHURCH AND SECULAR SOCIETIES 467
Societies for Moral Reform 469
Speech on African Colonization 472
MISCELLANEA 479
Review of the General Assembly of 1847 481
Report on Systematic Beneficence 505

52604

PAGE

Report on Foreign Missions..... 508
Sermon on National Sins..... 510
Relation of the State to Christ. (A Memorial.)..... 549
The Scribe Instructed..... 557
The Gospel Ministry..... 562

APPENDIXES..... 579
A. Argument for Church Boards, by the Rev. THOMAS SMYTH, D. D..... 581
B. Presbyterianism, by the Rev. CHARLES HODGE, D. D..... 616

EDITORS' PREFACE TO VOL. IV.

THIS volume contains all its author's writings, so far as we have been able to collect them, on the subject of the Church. It completes the number originally proposed for those of his works which are more or less strictly of a theological character.

There are two things connected with the remarkable providence of Dr. Thornwell's death at the comparatively early age of fifty years, which, in our human dialect, we say are to be deeply regretted. The first is, that many of the priceless treasures accumulated by sanctified genius quickened into energy by extraordinary industry, which in the judgment of all who knew him he was best prepared to pour forth just when he was summoned to die, are irrecoverably lost to us. Mighty thoughts, for which he had wrestled, as in agony, in the sleepless hours of night, went unuttered with his spirit into the eternal sphere. He took more with him than he left behind, great as is the legacy which he has bequeathed the Church. The second cause of regret is, that he did not live to perfect what he had written and to reduce it to systematic form—a task as easy to his logical mind as desirable to the completeness of his works, but one which, from the nature of the case, no survivor could attempt to execute. It would be strange indeed if the reader did not meet certain utter-

ances in these collected writings which do not appear to be strictly consistent with each other. They represent every period of the history of the author as a growing thinker, and furnish proof that he was free from that obstinacy and conceit which he himself, in his portraiture of true consistency, has so graphically described as refusing to admit any change of views though necessitated by the interests of truth. The growth and modification of opinion in Dr. Thornwell's case are presented in these writings as matter of interest in the personal history of a great man. As an instance in point we may mention—what the reader may have noticed—that in his treatise on the Necessity of the Atonement in the second volume, and in the second of the series on the Standard and Nature of Religion in the third volume, Dr. Thornwell enounced the doctrine of the sole causality of God, and in his later lecture on the State and Nature of Sin in the first he concedes a real efficiency to the human will. But we know of no other modification of opinion as marked as that. In his discussion of the unity of the race in Adam, in the lecture on Original Sin, he is not open to the criticism which we have heard expressed, that he had abandoned the ground taken in his review of Dr. Baird's "Elohim Revealed." To the last he denied the numerical identity of the race with Adam. The apparent discrepancy between his utterances in regard to the relative importance of the internal and external evidences of Christianity, in his discussion of the Office of Reason in regard to Revelation and that of Miracles in the third volume, will in great measure disappear when the point of view from which he was considering the subject is taken into account. The seeming incongruity of his views in relation to certain ecclesiastical measures will be found, we

trust, to be sufficiently explained in the Prefatory Note to the section in this volume entitled Church-Operations.

The materials which remain to be published may perhaps not make more than one additional volume of valuable *miscellanea*. But we are happy to be able to say that the Rev. B. M. Palmer, D. D., of New Orleans, may be expected, if Providence permit, to furnish a sixth volume, comprising the Life and Letters of Dr. Thornwell. His life, it is true, was comparatively secluded, yet it occupied an eventful period both in the Church and in the State; and the retired thinker impressed himself strongly upon both. The task of setting forth exactly what influence Dr. Thornwell exercised in these two spheres could not be committed to better hands than those of his very intimate and particular friend to whom we have alluded.

We now pause in our editorial labours, but, with God's blessing, will resume them as soon as there appears to be a demand for what remains.

CHURCH-OFFICERS.

PREFATORY NOTE.

UNDER the general title of Church-Officers are here grouped several monographs by Dr. Thornwell:

1. The first, entitled "*The Call of the Minister*," was, under the title of "*The Christian Pastor*," published in the Southern Presbyterian Review, December, 1847. It discusses especially the question, What are the Elements which evince a Call to the Gospel Ministry?

2. The second, entitled "*The Ruling Elder*," was published in the same Review, June, 1848. As an argument it is intended to prove that, according to the Standards of the Presbyterian Church and the Scriptures, the Ruling Elder is a Presbyter, an integral element of the Presbytery, and his presence necessary to its regular constitution; and that, consequently, he has the right to participate in all strictly Presbyterial acts, and to take part in all the stages of the process by which Ministers of the Word are ordained.

3. The third, entitled "*The Ruling Elder a Presbyter*," was originally published in December, 1843, in the Spirit of the Nineteenth Century, a magazine conducted in Baltimore by Dr. R. J. Breckinridge, and was, therefore, an earlier production than either of the two preceding. It was, in July, 1867, republished in the Southern Presbyterian Review. Its design is to show from the records of the Apostolic and Primitive Church that the Ruling Elder was a Presbyter therein, and was by consequence entitled to impose hands at the ordination of the Minister of the Word.

4. A brief series of Resolutions is appended, in which Dr. Thornwell sets forth the rights of Ruling Elders. It was prepared to be submitted to the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia in the year 1843, at a time when the whole Presbyterian Church in this country was agitated upon the question. But it being the last meeting of that Synod as a united body, its attention was necessarily absorbed in the business of the separation, and he found no time to introduce them.

5. The fifth, entitled "*Presbyterianism and the Eldership*," is a sketch of a sermon first preached September 21, 1856, at the ordination of Ruling Elders Muller, Gaston and McMaster in the Columbia Church, and repeated in 1861 at the Second Presbyterian Church, Charleston, at the request of Ruling Elders in that city.

CHURCH-OFFICERS.

THE CALL OF THE MINISTER:

BEING A REVIEW

OF BRECKINRIDGE'S CHRISTIAN PASTOR.

DR. BRECKINRIDGE'S pamphlet consists of three separate tracts, all bearing directly upon questions which have been recently agitated in reference to the polity of the Presbyterian Church. The first is a sermon preached at the installation of the Rev. Robert W. Dunlap as pastor of the Presbyterian congregation worshipping in Aisquith street, Baltimore, and was intended, as we learn from its title-page, "to vindicate the Divine calling of the Pastors of the Christian Church, to illustrate the divinely-appointed evidence thereof, and to lift up a warning voice against prevailing errors." The second is a speech, or rather the "substance of an argument on the composition of the Quorum of a Presbytery, delivered in the Synod of Philadelphia, met at Baltimore, on the 20th of October, 1843." And the third is "The substance of an argument," delivered in the same Synod, "on the right of Ruling Elders, when members of Presbytery, to impose hands in the ordination of Ministers of the Word."

To say that these subjects are discussed with ability is only the statement, in another form, that they are discussed by Dr. Breckinridge. Malice itself has never ventured to deny to him the distinction of extraordinary endowments;

and though he is sometimes terrible in the derision and scorn which he inflicts upon fraudulent seducers, driving the burning chariot of his zeal over the heads of impostors, hypocrites and formalists,[1] yet the history of his life is the history of a man "for dignity composed and high exploit," instinct with the spirit of noble deeds, of calm and settled confidence in truth, lofty in his aims, intrepid in his purposes and immeasurably superior to the tricks of sophistry and the arts of concealment. When his voice is for war, it is *open* war that he proclaims; and whether in behalf of his Church or his country, at home or abroad, he exhibits the same unshaken magnanimity—the contempt of danger and stability of mind which fit a man, as exigencies may require, to be a hero or a martyr. We confess that we love him—love him for his own and love him for Christ's sake. Our children will remember, though we may forget, the author of that memorable document, the Act and Testimony—a document which deserves to be placed side by side with the immortal covenants of Scotland; and although the gratitude of his own generation may be denied, the praises of posterity will not be wanting to the man who, in times of amazing defection and apostasy, when the profession of the truth was a badge either of weakness or ignorance, was found, like Abdiel among the conspirators of heaven, "faithful among the faithless."

> "Among innumerable false, unmoved,
> Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
> His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal."

Our purpose, however, is not to discuss the merits of Dr. Breckinridge as a man, but to lay before our readers, as briefly as the nature of the subjects will admit, the great principles for which he has contended in the pamphlet before us. At present we shall confine ourselves to the Sermon.

The text is taken from Ephesians iv. 8: "When he as-

[1] The reader will recollect the exquisite passage on zeal in Milton's Apology for Smectymnuus.

cended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men," and the Christian Pastor is accordingly treated as one of the ascension gifts of the Redeemer. The nature of Dr. Breckinridge's design precluded him from bestowing any "labour in establishing the distinction, received by nearly all Protestants, and expressly asserted in our ecclesiastical Standards, between the extraordinary and the ordinary offices constituted by Christ in His Church; or in showing precisely which are permanent and which are not; or in pointing out the precise nature and boundaries of such as are perpetual." We have long felt the want of some brief, clear and learned discussion of these points, and we know of no greater service which, in these days of ecclesiastical extravagance, one could render to the Church than to furnish such a treatise. Many valuable hints are suggested in the First Book of Warburton's Doctrine of Grace; and if the passages which he adduces and the general course of reasoning which he adopts be not conclusive, there is no text of Scripture, so far as we know, which *directly* teaches that *any* of the offices instituted by Christ were temporary and occasional, nor is there any method by which this can be satisfactorily demonstrated. The principle upon which our Standards themselves seem to justify their doctrine is, that when the gifts which are essential to an office are withdrawn, the office itself is necessarily revoked. Miraculous gifts are indispensable to Prophets and Apostles, and, they having ceased, Prophets and Apostles have ceased with them. But the question here arises, What is the scriptural evidence that these miraculous gifts should cease? The Papists contend that they are still to be found in the Church; and though we may safely join issue with them as to the fact, how shall we show from the Word of God that it was never *intended* to perpetuate them? How shall we prove from the Scriptures that the present withdrawal of these gifts is not in anger, not a rebuke to the Church's unfaithfulness and want of prayer, but an integral part of the present dispensation of the Gospel? We may say that the *end* of all

these extraordinary offices has been accomplished, and that they have consequently become useless. From the accomplishment of the end to the cessation of the means, the argument may be admitted to be sound; but where is the scriptural proof of what was the end in the present case? How do we know what precise purpose God intended to effect? It may be that this purpose is now adequately met in the written Rule of Faith with which we are furnished, but it is certainly easier to make the statement than to prove it from the Scriptures. If our limits allowed, we would gladly enter upon this subject here, but must content ourselves with a general reference to the Second Book of the Doctrine of Grace.[1] It deserves to be remarked that, according to the American Standards all extraordinary offices are not necessarily temporary. The Evangelist is an extraordinary officer, and yet is to be continued in the world as long as there are frontier and destitute settlements in which churches are to be planted and the Gospel established.

This peculiarity is essential to the perfection of the Presbyterian system, and makes it what, it strikes us, no other system of church-government is, an adequate institute for *gathering* churches as well as *governing* those which are already gathered. Episcopacy, whether Diocesan or Parochial, supposes a Church already formed; Congregationalism implies the previous existence of the Brethren; Pastors have relation to a fixed charge; and the Evangelist is the only officer who is set apart for the express purpose of making aggressive attacks on the world. He goes where there cannot be Bishops and Pastors: he prepares the way for these messengers of Christ by making ready a people called of the Lord. It is this feature in our system which makes ours so pre-eminently a missionary Church.

[1] We are not to be understood as endorsing Warburton's doctrine in regard to the operations of the Spirit in the calling and sanctification of men. We have an absolute horror of his low and grovelling views upon everything connected with the essence of the Gospel. But his argument in favour of the cessation of miraculous gifts is very able and ingenious.

The general relation in which all officers, whether ordinary or extraordinary, perpetual or temporary, stand to the Church, is that of *ministry*. "They are all ordained, not in a way of honour, but for arduous labour; the work required is, in a proper sense, a service of the Church, not a dominion over it; the great object of it is to perfect the saints and to edify the body of Christ, and they were all amongst His ascension gifts."[1] This ministry, in its permanent arrangements, embraces the dispensation of the Word and sacraments, the exercise of government and the distribution of alms, and is accordingly composed, as its ordinary elements, of Teachers, Rulers and Deacons. "It is not only incredible but absurd to suppose"—as Dr. Breckinridge very properly remarks—"that our church should first define that a ministry is divinely appointed, and then define that it consists ordinarily and permanently of Pastors, Elders and Deacons; and yet that it should mean that the word *ministry* can signify nothing but *Preachers* of the Gospel."[2] The truth is, all ecclesiastical officers are equally *ministers*, equally servants of the Church, equally appointed by Christ, equally called to be "abundant in labours;" none are to be idle; there is work for every hand, employment for every mind. Indeed, "the word rendered *ministry* is not only used throughout the New Testament in reference to every kind of office-bearer mentioned in it, but is applied to many sorts of functions in the way of service which even private persons can perform."[3] But if its officers are only a *ministry*, the Church is not created by them nor dependent upon them. They were given to the Church, but the Church has never been given to them. They are servants, not lords—creatures, and not creators. This point is strikingly presented in the following paragraph of the Sermon:

"Christ had a Church in the world before there was either Apostle, or Prophet, or Evangelist, or Pastor, or Teacher, and He will have His Church around Him through eternal ages, after all His saints are

[1] Sermon, p. 8. [2] Ibid. [3] See foot-note on p. 8, Sermon.

gathered and perfected, and when oracles, ordinances and ministry shall have fulfilled their work. His bride was equally His undefiled, His only one, before any ordinance was established, or any oracle given, or any ministry constituted, as she is now that we enjoy all these proofs of His care and love; and if there had never been an office-bearer of the race of Adam given as a servant to minister unto her, if angels had been her only ministers for ever, or the Divine Spirit had disdained all secondary agencies, or were now to reject the whole body of sinful men who are nothing but as he enables them, still that spotless bride would be the Lamb's wife by a covenant reaching from the depths of eternity, steadfast as the oath of God can make it, and sacred by the blood of Jesus with which it is sealed. No! no! there is no lordship, no headship, in Christ's Church, but that of Christ Himself: these are but servants in the Church for Christ's sake, and their Master's rule is this: 'Whosoever would be chief among you, let him be your servant.' Matt. xx. 27; xxiii. 11. And if we will but keep steadily before our minds this solitary truth, that Christ's people, His Church, are before, above, independent of, all office-bearers ever given to them, far more than any Commonwealth is distinct from and superior to the authorities which may, at any time, exist in it, or the form of administration which may, at any period, prevail in it, it will bear us clearly and firmly onward through all the snares which ignorance, superstition, fanaticism, the lust of power and the pride of caste have set to entrap God's people into abominable will-worship, or hateful, though perverse men choose to call it voluntary, humility."—P. 9.

The pregnant truth presented in this passage is fatal to the pretensions of Popery, Puseyism and every other system which makes the being of a Church and the covenant mercies of God dependent upon any form of outward administration or external order. The distinction is broad and clear between the Church in its essence as the mystical body of Christ and the form in which it is rendered visible to men; and while there can be no doubt, at least among Presbyterians, who have always contended for their government as a matter of Divine appointment, that the polity by which it ought to be distinguished is accurately and minutely described in the Scriptures, that polity is so far from being indispensable to its existence that its existence is actually presupposed as essential to the polity. Union with Christ through the effectual working of the Holy Ghost—this

makes a Christian man; and whoever is joined to the Head possesses communion with all the members. He is an element of the true Church, a member of the vast congregation chosen by the Father, redeemed by the Son and renewed by the Spirit. He is in favour with God, and is saved, not upon the vague principle of an undefined mercy, but through the blood of that everlasting covenant which extends only to the Church. All that possess the Spirit of Christ possess Christ, and all who possess Christ possess all things essential to salvation. They are complete in Him.

Recognizing the distinction between the *Church* in its essential elements and the mode of its external manifestation, the Presbyterian Standards avoid the narrow and exclusive spirit which would limit God's covenant to their own little household; they can find members of Christ's Church beyond their own doors. By contending, at the same time, that Christ has prescribed the model in conformity with which His people should be governed, they avoid the licentiousness which would give to man the same power and discretion in fixing ecclesiastical, which may be lawfully claimed in settling civil, constitutions. They are, consequently, neither bigots on the one hand nor libertines on the other. They embrace in charity all who love Christ, and they testify in faithfulness against all who pervert the order of His house. "The present Reformed Churches," says Dr. Breckinridge in the First Speech contained in his pamphlet, "the present Reformed Churches, and especially those standards from which ours have been chiefly taken, are clear and positive in asserting the *jus divinum* of Presbyterian Government—a *jus divinum* of the same character as that asserted for our system of doctrine, requiring in both cases a simple and faithful adherence on our part, and requiring, in neither, harshness or intolerance toward those who differ from us—asserting in both cases the duty of God's people, but denying in neither, that His people may be gathered into true churches, though their doctrine or their order may not seem to us scriptural in all respects."

It seems to us self-evident that "we have no more warrant"—to use the language of Dr. Breckinridge near the close of his Sermon—"we have no more warrant from God to make a church-government for Him, and in His name, than to make any other part of His religion. It is idle to talk about church government being *jure divino* in its great principles and not in its details, or, as they say, in *the abstract* and not in the *concrete*. The truth is, it is both, for not only are the great principles laid down for us, but the officers and courts are named; the nature and duties of the one, the qualifications, the vocation and powers of the other, are set forth; the relations of all the parts to each other and to the whole are precisely set forth. A government in general, the kind of government in particular, the officers and courts in special, their duties and powers in detail—this is what God has set before us, by revelation, for the Christian Church." These views, we insist upon it, are just, but whether just or false, they are views which have always characterized the Presbyterian Church, and which are distinctly and in different forms of statement inculcated in our Standards. We have undertaken in our Formularies to make nothing, to create nothing: we have simply *declared* what the Word of the Lord reveals. We have given the result of our interpretations of Scripture, both in reference to order and doctrine; and our Presbyterian polity is placed upon the same foundation with our system of evangelic truth. We might as well say that no scheme of doctrine is plainly revealed in the Scriptures because learned and good men differ in their views of what is enjoined, as to say that no plan of government is commanded because there is a diversity of opinions upon this point also. Socinians cannot find the Sonship of Christ in the Bible, but what Presbyterian doubts it is there? Arminians cannot find the sovereignty of God in election and reprobation, but what Calvinist hesitates to affirm that it is not only there, but plainly there? And so Prelatists and Congregationalists may be unable to detect the ele-

ments of Presbytery, but yet they may be there, obscure to nothing but the eye of prejudice.

We have dwelt, at disproportionate length, upon this point, because we are apprehensive that a disposition prevails in some quarters to relinquish the ground which our Church has heretofore uniformly held. We dread the consequences of surrendering the *jus divinum Presbyterii*. The power of our system has never been effectually tried, and its full strength can never be developed until our people shall be brought to feel that it is an institute of God. As long as we hesitate to trust it, or rather to trust in the Almighty Saviour who appointed it, we shall not be permitted to do valiantly for our Master and His cause. "Obedience is better than sacrifice."

Having defined the general relation of the pastoral and all other offices to the people of God, and deduced the inference which obviously follows from the true statement of the case, Dr. Breckinridge proceeds to the immediate subject of his Sermon—the nature and evidence of a call to the ministry of the Word. He first exposes the futility of the three prominent theories to which almost every form of error upon this great subject may be ultimately reduced. All pretensions which are not founded upon a real call of God, properly authenticated according to the provisions of His Word, must either claim to be extraordinary, and then extraordinary evidence should be produced; or, they rest upon a perpetual succession which has transmitted the rights and properties of the office from Christ the Head through an unbroken line of office-bearers to the present incumbent, and then the succession becomes a question of fact to be proved by testimony, and the validity of the title founded upon it a doctrine to be established by Scripture; or, they rest upon the conviction and belief of the individual himself, unsupported by any proof but his own extravagance or enthusiasm. These false pretensions to official authority are briefly but ably discussed. The argument against the theory of succession is neatly and conclusively

presented, and if our limits allowed, we would cheerfully extract it here.

The true grounds upon which the vocation of a Christian Pastor rests are next discussed. "They have relation," we are told—"1. To God Himself; 2. To the man's own conscience; 3. To the Christian people; and 4. To those who bear office in the Church."

It is the prerogative of God, and of God alone, to select the men who shall be invested with authority in His Church; and the validity of this Divine call is evinced to others and rendered satisfactory to ourselves by the testimony of our own consciences, the approbation of God's people and the concurrence of God's earthly courts. Conscience, the Church, the Presbytery—these do not call into the ministry, but only *declare* God's call; they are the forms in which the Divine designation is indicated—the scriptural evidences that he who possesses them is no intruder into the sacred ministry. Dr. Breckinridge shows that "at every period and under every dispensation God has been pleased to reserve to Himself a great and a direct agency in designating those who should minister to His people in holy things." Under the Levitical economy none could be invested with the priesthood without the appointment of God, and under the Christian economy the sanction of Christ the Lord is equally indispensable to any who would become stewards of His mysteries. "The analogy between the methods by which persons were admitted into the visible Church and called of God to the service of religious functions, as compared with each other, under the Old Testament dispensation, and the methods adopted for the same ends, as compared with each other, under the New Testament dispensation," is very strikingly exhibited on the fifteenth page of the Sermon.

If this great truth be admitted—and we do not see how it can be questioned—that it is God, and God alone, who can either call to or qualify for the sacred office, the consequences which flow from it are absolutely incompatible

with many prevailing principles and practices. The doctrine of the American Education Society—a doctrine, we are sorry to say, which has found favour in quarters where it ought to have been rebuked—that every young man of talents and attainments should devote himself to the ministry without some special reason to the contrary, is exactly reversed, and the true doctrine is that no man, whether young or old, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, should presume to dispense the mysteries of Christ without the strongest of all possible reasons for doing so—the imperative, invincible call of God. No one is to show cause why he ought *not* to be a Minister: he is to show cause why he *should* be a Minister. His call to the sacred profession is not the absence of a call to any other pursuit; it is direct, immediate, powerful, to this very department of labour. He is not here because he *can* be nowhere else, but he is nowhere else because he *must* be here.

The doctrine of a Divine call, it seems to us, is set aside—certainly the doctrine of an *immediate* call is set aside—by all who make the ministry a means to any other ends but those with which Christ has connected it. In the case which recently happened at Yale College, it is clear that the call to the ministry was the call to the presidency of that institution. Dr. Woolsey was made a Minister that he might govern a college, and the evidence that satisfied his mind that God had called him to the work was the simple fact that he had been chosen by the Fellows to succeed Dr. Day. Now, the vocation to the ministry is either direct or indirect. If it be direct, Dr. Woolsey could make no pretensions to it, as the intercourse between God and his conscience seems to have been conducted through the corporation of Yale College. If it be indirect, the channel through which it comes must be ascertained to us from the Scriptures; and as they say nothing about human institutions for the education of the young in the elements of science, it is certain that connection with such institutions cannot be the method of vouching a title to the ministry. So that whether

the vocation be direct or indirect, Dr. Woolsey, so far as appears, can make no pretensions to it on scriptural grounds. His ordination, we solemnly believe, was a mockery, an awful prostitution of the sacred office. The whole series of transactions connected with it was an open denial that a Divine call was absolutely necessary to a legitimate discharge of ministerial functions. We do not say that the agents intended to insult God or to trample on his Word, but we verily believe that, in ignorance or superstition, they have done both. We are slow to believe that, under any circumstances, a Minister of the Gospel ought to be the *president* of a college; but whether he be a president or not, his connection with it, if he has no other sphere of labour, should be as a *Minister*. He should be in it to preach the Gospel. This is his direct work, and where he has not scope and opportunity to perform it, he is not called to labour. The indirect influence of religion, in the various departments of instruction, is to be sought in the selection of godly laymen, and not in the degradation of able and efficient preachers. No preacher who has solemnly vowed to be faithful in the *public* duties of his office ought to be content with devoting his life to mathematics, chemistry or Greek, while he only *insinuates* the Gospel by hints and scraps, as occasional opportunities may be furnished. How, under such circumstances, is he or can he be faithful in the public duties of his office? The truth is, he is fulfilling *none* of the *peculiar* duties of his office: he is only doing what any good man might do and ought to do. Every college should unquestionably be supplied with the means of grace: there should be religious instruction; there should be the regular and stated ministrations of the Word; there should be a permanent chaplaincy. The Chaplain—or Pastor, for the name is nothing—is the only *preacher* that any institution demands; the secular departments of instruction can be filled, and in our view ought to be filled, by men who are not under vows which such positions compel them to violate. Of course these remarks have no application to

those who teach, either in schools or colleges, in order that they may support themselves in preaching the Gospel. For such laborious servants of God we entertain no other feelings but those of profound respect: they are entitled to all praise. They make secular pursuits subordinate to the ministry—they teach as Paul wrought at his trade; and if the sneers which have too often been directed at them were directed against those who merge the ministry in earthly avocations, as there would be justice in the censure, there would be more hope that good might result from it.

It is a popular error, proceeding from defective views of a call to the ministry, and indicated in our prayers and our whole theory of ministerial training, that we must look principally to *young* men as the persons whom God shall select to become the Pastors and Rulers of his people. These novices, thus early ascertained of their vocation, are to be trained and educated for the profession of a preacher, as other young men are trained and educated for the bar or the forum. We expect them to be called *early*, that they may go through the discipline which we conceive to be necessary, and hence we limit our prayers to this class of persons. But if the call be Divine, it must be sovereign; and it must impart a peculiar fitness, an unction of the Holy Ghost, which alone can adequately qualify for the duties of the office. If it be sovereign, it may extend to all classes and ages, to young and old, to rich and poor; to all professions and pursuits, to publicans at the receipt of custom, lawyers at the bar, merchants at the desk and physicians in their shops. We are not authorized to limit God's Spirit in this more than in any other department of His operations. He can call whom He pleases, and we should pray for an increase of labourers, without respect to the classes from which they are to spring. Then, again, as to their training, the old adage is certainly true: "Whom God appoints He anoints." The characteristic qualification for the ministry, the unction from on high, is the immediate gift of the Holy Ghost, and cannot be imparted by any agency of man. Human

learning is necessary—the more, the better; but human learning cannot, of itself, make a preacher. Discipline is necessary, but discipline is not Divine power, and is only an incidental help. The whole routine of theological education supposes a previous fitness in the subject, which it may aid but cannot impart.

Hence this training becomes necessary only among novices —among those whose faculties have not been developed and expanded by previous pursuits and previous studies. But in cases in which men of cultivated minds are called from other walks of life, it is absurd to suppose that they cannot be efficient preachers unless they have been graduated in a Theological Seminary. There is no charm in such institutions: they only burnish the weapons which the Minister is to use, but they do not supply him with his armour. Men may be able Ministers of the New Testament without being trained to it as a mere profession; and although human learning is indispensable, yet human learning is not of the essence of a call. He who is called must acquire it if he does not previously possess it; but he may possess it, and want that fitness which alone can render him successful. This fitness is not simply piety, for men may be both godly and learned, and yet utterly unqualified for the sacred functions of the ministry; it is a Divine, a heavenly, gift, which can be stirred by diligence, study, prayer, meditation and discipline, but which God alone can communicate.

Another evil consequence of overlooking or improperly conceiving God's exclusive prerogative to call into the ministry is the institution of plans "whose radical notion," in the language of Dr. Breckinridge—

"Seems to be that in some such way God's action in raising up and sending forth preachers may be stimulated, or its frequency increased. Such schemes, to say the very least, seem not so much directed to enquiries for such as God has called, as to experiments which may ascertain if He has not called a multitude besides. And it surely increases the danger greatly that youths in the first stages of religious experience—of tender years, of circumstances in which a gratuitous education is itself very often a powerful temptation, and the station

of a Minister of the Gospel a seduction nearly irresistible—are, to a great extent, the objects of these experiments. Suppose them to succeed perfectly, and the result is almost inevitably a class-ministry, and, what is worse still, an eleemosynary class-ministry.

"I readily concede that it is not only a clear duty, but a high privilege, to aid such as need it of those whom God calls to be Pastors to His people, and that there is every way a great reward in so doing. But I greatly doubt if it is the best way to accomplish this important end either to throw the door wide open and invite all to enter, that those we need may come in with them; or to cultivate the idea, as is constantly done, that God calls a very great majority of His Ministers from this class, and to talk as if He called few or none from any other; or to proceed as if it were not an immense evil for men to find entrance who are not called of God, or as if it were not a fearful calamity to weaken, in such poor youths as are called of Him, the spirit which leads them to struggle for self-support; or to set aside, virtually, the tribunals of God's house, in any part of the work of training and settling Ministers of the Word; or to train them because they are of this class, in any respect differently from other candidates. It is easy for us to multiply Ministers of the Gospel, but it is impossible for us to multiply such as are called of God. This is the great truth which men are ready to neglect, to deride. And the results of every attempt which we can make in disregard of it must always be disastrous. We may supplant a ministry called of God from all classes by a ministry raised up by ourselves from a single class, but have we thereby added anything but a principle of disorder, an element of disease?"

These views have a terrible sweep, and we ask our readers to ponder them well. It is unnecessary to state that Dr. Breckinridge could have designed no reflection upon poor young men. His Master had not where to lay His head, and it is to the poor, rich in faith, that the most precious consolations of the Gospel are directed. But no one will venture to affirm that none others are called into the ministry, or that temptations should be multiplied to these to deceive their own hearts. His remarks are directed against a system which aims mainly at the poor, and which he believes to be full of mischief. The practical lesson is, that instead of sounding a trumpet and hunting in the highways and hedges for those whom God has called,—instead of pressing upon the consciences of boys to examine themselves with a view to be ascertained whether or not

God has chosen them for the ministry, we should wait till God sends them to us, and then thoroughly scrutinize their claims. We are to be earnest in prayer for an increase of labourers, and when God answers us He will make the answer plain to those who are sent and to us who pray. None have a right, in the first instance, to deal with the consciences of others upon this subject but God Himself. We may devote our children to the Lord as Hannah devoted the son of her prayers, but this should be a solemn, secret transaction between our own souls and the Almighty. The call to our children is not to come through us; it is the eternal Spirit who impresses it on the heart, and He knows all who are His.

We are satisfied that the whole system of urging, as it is called, the claims of the ministry upon the minds of the young is inconsistent with just and scriptural views of its nature and duties. To preach the Gospel is a privilege, a distinction, and it has consequently claims upon no one until he possesses satisfactory evidence that he is entitled to the honour. It is the *call* which makes it his duty, and until the call is made known there can be no pressure of conscience about it. We might just as much inculcate it upon the untitled young men of England that they should prepare to assume the prerogatives of peers and knights, before the crown has intimated any intention to promote them, as to press upon any one the claims of the ministry before God has intimated His purpose to call. The effect of just views would be to make us pray more and contrive less, depend upon God and trust nothing in machinery. We should look to the Lord and not to societies, and we might consequently expect a ministry of power and not of caste. What we want is faith in God, and it is simply because we are afraid to confide in the Lord that we resort to manifold expedients of our own devising to supply the waste places of Zion. We apprehend that the ministry will die out unless we recruit it, and in our blindness and weakness and fear we take God's work into our own hands.

The direction of our Saviour was plain and pointed: "PRAY ye therefore the Lord of the harvest." It was not to seek ministers here and there, to persuade this man, that man or the other to take the subject into serious consideration, not to offer bribes to enter the sacred office; it was not in any wise to look to ourselves or to depend upon man, but "PRAY ye the LORD of the harvest." It is His privilege to provide labourers. Our duty is to ask for them; it is His prerogative to give them.

Dr. Breckinridge complains of the Seminaries that they do not correct the evils inherent in the system by which they are replenished, but it strikes us that the remedy should be sought in the church-courts. A proper vigilance on the part of Pastors, Sessions and Presbyteries, the prevalence of sound principles upon the whole subject of the ministry, and a persevering refusal in any case to ordain *sine titulo* those who are not to be truly Evangelists, would prevent much of the mischief which he so justly deplores. The Seminaries are nothing, and can be nothing, but what the church-courts may choose to make them, if these courts are faithful to themselves and faithful to God. It ought not to be a matter of course that a young man who has completed the *curriculum* of study prescribed in the Seminary is licensed by the Presbytery; his call and gifts should be as thoroughly scrutinized as if they had undergone no scrutiny before. To take the endorsement of the Theological Professors as a sufficient proof of his fitness for the office is a criminal neglect of its own duties.

In justice to Dr. Breckinridge we feel bound to insert the closing paragraph in the discussion of the first point in his Sermon—the exclusive prerogative of God to call into the ministry:

"Having thus spoken, I ought to add that while I solemnly believe that the methods now in use touching beneficiary education for the Gospel ministry are not without great danger, and that the general system of ministerial education is both defective and hazardous, and while I dare not say that, by these and other means, persons who ought never to have turned their attention to the office of

public teachers of religion may not have been introduced into it, and that some who may have been truly called of God are not tolerated in systematic covenant-breaking, for which they ought to be subjected to discipline; and while there appears to me to be a state of opinion upon the whole subject of a call of God to the Pastor's office, and the proper modes of ascertaining this and training the person for the work to which he is called, by no means satisfactory,—still it is also my deep and joyful conviction that, through the rich grace of Christ, the great body of our Ministers are men evidently called of God, and that they would have been a rich blessing to any age of the Christian Church. I pray God, and I thus labour, that it may never be otherwise, and I beseech my brethren to bear with a plainness of speech whose only object is the common good."

The next point which Dr. Breckinridge discusses is the proofs of a call:

"The grand and ultimate fact is the call of God; and everything else should be directed merely to the satisfactory ascertainment of this fact, to the best preparation of the person for the work, and to his official investiture upon scriptural grounds. I take the first and an indispensable proof of this call of God to be the inward testimony of the man's own conscience."

That a supernatural conviction of duty, wrought by the immediate agency of the Holy Ghost, is an essential element in the evidence of a true vocation to the ministry, seems to us to be the clear and authoritative doctrine of the Scriptures. Men are not led to the pastoral office as they are induced to select other professions in life; they are drawn, as a sinner is drawn to Christ, by a mighty, invincible work of the Spirit. The call of God never fails to be convincing. Men are made to feel that a woe is upon them if they preach not the Gospel. It is not that they *love* the work, for often, like Moses, they are reluctant to engage in it, and love at best can only render its duties pleasant; it is not that they *desire* the office, though in indulging this desire they seek a good thing; it is not that they are zealous for the glory of God and burn for the salvation of souls, for this is characteristic of every true believer; nor is it that upon a due estimate of their talents and acquirements they promise themselves more extended

usefulness in this department of labour than in any other, for no man is anything in the kingdom of heaven except as God makes him so: but it is that the Word of the Lord is like fire in their bones; they *must* preach it or die; they cannot escape from the awful impression, which haunts them night and day and banishes all peace from the soul until the will is bowed, that God has laid this work upon them at the hazard of their lives.

No man ought to enter the ministry upon mere conjectural grounds. He that doubteth is damned. If there be a calling in which at every step in the progress of our labours we need the conviction that God is with us, that we are in the line of duty prescribed by His own eternal Spirit, that calling is the ministry of the Word. A man ought to have assurance that he is no intruder before he should dare to assume responsibilities at which an angel might tremble. He should have a commission certified to his own mind from the King of heaven before he should venture to announce himself as God's ambassador or Christ's herald. We do not say that his assurance will never be disturbed, or that his mind will never be tossed with doubts; but we will say that he can never preach in peace and comfort and hope as long as he is troubled about his authority to preach at all. The assurance of a call to the ministry is, like the assurance of our pardon and acceptance, subject to many fluctuations, preserved by faithfulness, dependent on humility and singleness of heart, a source of joy when clear, of agony when darkened or disturbed. We cannot persuade ourselves that a man who has never had this assurance at all has ever been called of God. We see not how such a man can have the testimony of a good conscience. Conscience supposes light, but in this case, according to the very terms of the supposition, there is no light.

These have long been our fixed and deliberate convictions upon the subject; and we have often lamented that vague calculations of expediency have been, in too many instances, substituted in the place of a Divine call. "My

object," says one of the profoundest thinkers of modern times—"my object shall be through life the *greatest good*, and I hold myself, and will ever hold myself, at liberty to seek it in *any line* that appears most promising, and so to change one line for another when another more advantageous presents itself." A vaguer rule of conduct could not be prescribed; and if this was the secret of Foster's call to the ministry, we can readily understand why his labours, notwithstanding his brilliant talents, were so little blessed of God. Duty must ever be the measure of expediency; and a man can only know in what line he can promote the greatest good by knowing in what line God has called him to labour. A man may have the zeal of Paul, the eloquence of Apollos, the boldness of Peter, and the meekness of John, he may be adorned with all human gifts and enriched with all human attractions, and yet, if the Lord withhold his blessing, he may preach in vain and prophesy in vain. All the deductions of a cold, utilitarian philosophy will absolutely come to naught. The grand question, then, is, Will God bless? and that question can be satisfactorily answered only by answering another, Has God called? Here conscience, under the guidance of the Spirit, must *first* answer, and until it is prepared to answer in the affirmative, the first step should not be taken in seeking the ministry.

"In every act we can perform on earth we are entitled to expect, before we can be required to perform it—and we are bound to have, before we venture to perform it—the testimony of a good conscience; and the clearness and force of our conscientious convictions should be analogous to the magnitude, the perplexity, the difficulty, of the contemplated duty. For a man, then, to presume to be an ambassador for Almighty God, and that touching questions no less awful than the glory of His throne and the endless states of His rebellious subjects, without a settled conviction in his own soul that this fearful trust is laid on him by the King eternal, is insane audacity. I say not he must be convinced he ought to be sent: Moses pleaded hard against his mission; the conviction must be that he is sent. I say not he must judge that he is fit to be sent, for no man is fit. I say not that this or the other motive, as many will assert, or any motive at all, beside the

simple one of obedience to the voice of the heavenly monitor, should mingle with the inward, fixed conviction; nor that this proof or the other proof, as many will contend, or any proof at all, beside the testimony of consciousness itself, should beget within us this strong assurance that it is God's Spirit which has wrought us for this selfsame thing. I say not there may not be doubts and perplexities, trials very sore and temptations of the Adversary, fightings without and fears within, and troubles on every side; for if these things be not, it is either that grace is overwhelmingly abundant, or that Satan judges us to be workmen that he need not fear. Nor do I deny that, like as the kingdom of heaven itself is but as a grain of mustard planted in the broken heart which must be watered by many a tear, and watched amid long and anxious vigils, as its roots strike down and its branches spread strongly and widely abroad; so, this inward testimony of a Divine vocation may be a whisper to the soul, almost inaudible in the profoundest stillness of the spirit of man, lost, restored again, strengthened, repeated, struggling amidst the passions that toss us to and fro, and fighting against the sins that would quench it; following us, if need be, as God followed Jonah, till out of the belly of hell the right of the Almighty Disposer is confessed."

The testimony of conscience, however, is not final and conclusive. We may deceive ourselves as well as be deceived by others; and to fortify our hearts and diminish the dangers of deception, God has appointed the approbation of His own people and the concurrence of the courts of His house as additional links in the chain of evidence which, in all ordinary cases, is to authenticate a call from Him.

"The grand object of the work of the ministry"—we quote from the Sermon—"the grand object of the work of the ministry, divinely announced in the very context before us, is 'the perfecting of the saints,' 'the edifying of the body of Christ' (verse 12). He who cannot in his ministry build up the saints cannot have from God any part of 'the work of the ministry,' least of all that part to which the preaching of the Gospel appertains. But, beyond all controversy, the saints are the best of all judges whether the ministrations on which they wait fructify them or not. Their call and their rejection are therefore alike decisive, so far as the case depends on their testimony. Again, he who cannot, in the work of the ministry, edify the body of Christ, cannot be called of God to that ministry. But, surely, the Church must decide for itself whether or not it is edified by the ministrations offered to it. Its decision, therefore, is conclusive, so far as the case depends on its call. It is impossible to escape from this

direct testimony of the Word of life. It does not follow that every man who could edify the Church and build up the saints is therefore called of God to some public ministry, for to labour after both these precious objects is, in some form or other, the duty of every member of the household of faith. The *positive* testimony of the Christian people is not therefore conclusive, as I have before shown that two previous testimonies are indispensable. But it is otherwise of its *negative* testimony. Many may have neglected, through ignorance, to seek this trial of their call, who might have obtained its testimony; and it is doubtless this conviction which justifies us in acting as if their call of God could not be questioned. Many may have obtained it after their ordination—a course dangerous and irregular, but not therefore fatal. But he who *cannot* obtain it seems to me to be shut out of the ministry by the direct prescriptions of the Word of God. Nor am I able to conceive it possible that any character or amount of proof can sufficiently attest the Divine call of any human being to be a Christian Pastor, if he is unable to obtain this attestation of the Christian people. For how is it possible for us to believe that he has been appointed of God expressly to perform a particular work for which nothing but Divine grace can fit him, of whom it is made certain that God has not given him the grace needful to the accomplishment of the work?"

The ordinary form in which the approbation of the Christian people is to be manifested is through the call of some particular congregation. Our Church, in conformity with the example of other Presbyterian Churches, has adopted the plan of subjecting candidates for the ministry of the Word to a probationary exercise of their talents and their gifts, in order that "the churches may have an opportunity to form a better judgment respecting the talents of those by whom they are to be instructed and governed;" and no such probationer can be ordained at all, except upon the call of some particular congregation, or upon the solemn pledge to discharge the functions of an Evangelist in "destitute and frontier settlements." The approbation of God's people is an element in the proof of God's call which no conscientious man should be willing to relinquish. He should know that he is able to edify the saints before he undertakes the solemn task. In the case of Evangelists this proof cannot be directly had; but that office is confessedly

extraordinary, and in its privations and sacrifices presents fewer temptations to self-deception than the ordinary work of a Bishop. But where men are not to become scriptural Evangelists, we do not believe that any court on earth has a right to ordain them without a reference to some special charge, or that, being ordained, they themselves have a right to act, deliberate and vote in any ecclesiastical judicatory. The thing is contrary to the whole spirit of Presbyterianism, utterly unsupported by the Word of God, and directly subversive of a free, representative government. It was unknown to the purest ages of the Church, was expressly rebuked and forbidden when it began to be practised, and has wrought nothing but mischief wherever it has prevailed. That such men, ordained without reference to a cure, are not true Ministers, we will not venture to assert; but that *they* want and that the *Church* wants a very important element of the proof that they are true Ministers—that their credentials, in other words, are only partially authenticated—we have no hesitation in affirming. But it may be said that the Church is not a single congregation, as the Independents represent it to be, but embraces the entire body of believers; that the ministry was given to the Church as a whole, and that, therefore, the voice of the whole Church, and not of an insulated fragment, is necessary to vouch a Divine call; that the action, consequently, of any single congregation is of no further importance than as giving a Minister the right to teach and govern in it. Dr. Breckinridge, in presenting what we conceive to be the scriptural doctrine concerning the unity of the Church and the relation in which the parts stand to the whole, has supplied a complete refutation of this plausible cavil.

"But our received faith is, that into how many parts soever our Church may be divided for convenience' sake, or from necessity, either as congregations or as larger portions, still, the whole of these parts constitute but one Church. It follows that all the office-bearers who may be more particularly attached to any one portion of this Church are, in the same sense, office-bearers of the whole body, as the particular part is one portion of the whole; and therefore the action of any

particular portion—as a single congregation—in virtue of which any particular office-bearer is set apart, is necessarily taken as decisive of the entire question concerning his vocation as completely as if the whole body had acted upon every case, which is physically impossible. And this is the more evident when it is considered that, in the nature of the case, the same principle is applied to every conceivable state of the Church, however small it may be, or however great; for each particular congregation is supposed to have everything which the whole Church has—the same officers, the same ordinances, the same kind of powers, derived from the same Divine source; every one in all respects like all the rest, and like the whole united into one; so that if it was possible for the whole Church to be met in one place on one occasion, there would be absolutely nothing except a vast increase of what every single congregation should possess. Thus contemplated, we see not only the evil, but the folly and uselessness, of divisions amongst Christians, since the Lord Jesus has erected His Church upon such a model as to provide perfectly for its indefinite extension, and at the same time to secure its perfect unity. And when it is considered that the seal, which each particular congregation gives by its call to the vocation of any office-bearer in the Church, bears with it the highest and the most impressive evidence which can be given of human sincerity, in this, that they take the person to be their Teacher or Ruler or Distributor, that they commit their own highest interests into his hands, it is plain that no greater security is possible."

In regard to the sanction of the Christian people, three theories are conceivable as to the form in which it may be expressed. The first may be denominated *Prelatic*—not that it is proposed in so many words by the advocates of Prelacy, but it assumes a fundamental principle of that system touching the relation in which the rulers stand to the ruled. The Bishop is potentially the Church: the voice of the Bishop is consequently its voice and the act of the Bishop its act. Any theory which makes the approbation of the ordaining power the putative approbation of God's people, whether that power be a Prelate or a Presbytery, is essentially the same; and any hypothesis which maintains that Ministers can be created at large, sustaining an official relation to the whole Church, independently of the cure and oversight of any part of it; which makes a call not an important element in settling the preliminary question, whether the office shall be conferred, but simply the ground of a right to ex-

ercise its functions in a particular place; which entitles a man to become a Pastor because he is a Minister of the entire Church, instead of making him a Minister of the entire Church because he is a Pastor,—any such hypothesis is utterly destructive of a free government. It leads necessarily to monarchy or aristocracy; it makes the people *as such*—as distinct from their rulers, and as putatively represented by them—absolute ciphers, as well in the choice of their masters as in the administration of the government.

The second theory is that of Independents, who virtually deny a Catholic Church, and limit all offices to single congregations.

The third is the one which we conceive to be developed in our own Standards, and which Dr. Breckinridge has so happily illustrated in the preceding extract. In it the unity of the whole and the integrity and perfection of each part are beautifully preserved. Upon this hypothesis the visible Church is one body, consisting of many members; and as the motions of the hand, the head, the foot, are the motions of the man, so the healthful and regular action of any single congregation is the action of the universal Church. The voice of a part, properly expressed, is the voice of the whole. He who is called by a single congregation is called by the entire Church; he who is supported by a single congregation is supported by the entire Church; and he who can edify no congregation can, under no circumstances, become a shepherd of the Lord's flock. Every Pastor is a Minister of the whole: his call gives him at once a general office and a special field of labour.

We shall conclude this branch of the subject with the following note, which occurs on the 29th and 30th pages of the Sermon:

"I presume it will hardly be questioned that it has always been the common doctrine of all foreign Presbyterian Churches that Ministers of the Word, when they are ordained, ought to be assigned to some particular ecclesiastical charge, or that it is the received theory of

church-order amongst them generally, that the moment such a Minister is without an ecclesiastical charge he is without the least right or power to sit in any church-court, or exercise any rule in the Church, as a minister of the Word. A recent and memorable instance illustrates this in the Church of Scotland. The Rev. Dr. Welsh, who was Moderator of the Scottish Assembly of 1843, and a member of the Free Assembly of 1844, and constituted that body as its presiding officer at its first meeting, sat in both those assemblies as a Ruling Elder, by delegation as such, and this notwithstanding he was one of the Theological Professors in the University of Edinburgh. It is well known that the original Secession under Ebenezer Erskine, and the subsequent one under Thomas Gillespie, in Scotland, had both, but especially the latter, direct relation to the question of ordaining and inducting Pastors without a real call. Witherspoon, throughout his Characteristics and the Apology for that work, everywhere holds this proceeding as monstrous in itself and one cause of the corruption of the Church of Scotland; and this same Witherspoon was, more than any other man, the author of our Church-constitution, under which his name is used to justify what he not only abhorred, but had like to have been deposed for ridiculing and denouncing. In the year 1768 the Secession Church of Scotland decided this question point blank that McAra, Minister at Burntshield, having demitted his charge, and having no charge of any congregation, ought not to sit and judge in any ecclesiastical judicatory, and that his name should be dropped. And in 1773 this decision, upon full consideration, was affirmed upon general grounds, as unquestionable Presbyterian doctrine. (*See McKerrow's History of the Secession Church*, p. 546–51, *Glasgow*, 1841.) The conclusions and grounds of the Synod are given at large by McKerrow; and I must say that it affords a singular gratification to me to find every general principle therein settled precisely in accordance with all I have contended for, in this country, in regard to the nature of scriptural Presbyterian order and the offices of Ruling Elder and Minister of the Word, although I did not know of the existence of McKerrow's book nor of this important decision of this question until after my opinions had been several years published."

The last point which Dr. Breckinridge discusses is "the relation which the question of any man's call to the pastoral office bears to those who already hold office, of whatever kind, in the Church of Christ." He contends that "the final testimony which we want to the fact that we have been divinely called to preach the everlasting Gospel is that of a divinely constituted spiritual court, met in the name of the

Lord Jesus Christ and acting by His authority." Dr. Breckinridge differs from many of his brethren, though not, as we believe, from the Word of God, in regard to the essential elements of such a court, and the rights and privileges which pertain to each class of its members in the business of ordination. These points, however, we shall reserve for a future occasion, when we propose to review his Speeches before the Synod of Philadelphia.[1]

We hope that our readers will not be satisfied with the rapid and meagre sketch which we have given of this masterly discourse upon a subject of vital interest. We hope that they will procure it and read it for themselves. The warnings of Dr. Breckinridge are wise and seasonable; and if the principles which he defends are not the doctrines of our Standards, we have altogether mistaken their true and, as it seems to us, obvious import. There are some subordinate matters, not at all affecting the merits of the Sermon, in which we cannot concur with the author—such, for example, as the statement on the twenty-second page, in reference to an extraordinary incident in the experience and ministry of the great Apostle to the Gentiles. It seems to us that the vision recorded in Acts xxii. 17–22 took place upon Paul's visit to Jerusalem immediately after his conversion, and not upon the visit which he made after his return from Arabia. So, again, we doubt whether there is any provision in our Constitution similar to that contemplated in the recent overture to the General Assembly for the demission of the ministerial office on the part of preachers. But the doctrine of a Divine, supernatural call to the ministry by the immediate agency of the Holy Ghost, evinced by the testimony of conscience, the approbation of God's people and the sanction of God's judicatories, we hold to be alike the doctrine of our Standards and of the sacred Scriptures. Ordinations *sine titulo*, except in the case of real Evangelists, we hold to be irregular, unscriptural and dangerous; and the right of Min-

[1] See the discussion, which immediately follows this, on "The Ruling Elder."

isters "without charge" to rule God's heritage we hold to be contradicted by every distinctive principle of Presbyterianism. In these great principles we express our full and hearty concurrence with the author of the Sermon, and we bid him a cordial Godspeed in his efforts to spread them.

THE RULING ELDER:

BEING A REVIEW OF TWO SPEECHES OF DR. BRECKINRIDGE.

IN our review of Dr. Breckinridge's Sermon we were conducted, by the natural order of the subject, to the vexed questions which are elaborately discussed in the Speeches before us. Our limits did not allow us to give them then the prominence and attention which their magnitude and importance demanded. We accordingly reserved the remarks which we had excogitated upon them to another opportunity, when we proposed to subject the Speeches to an analysis similar to that to which we had subjected the Sermon. The convenient season has now arrived, and we undertake to redeem the pledge which was implicitly given in our former article, though many of our readers would, perhaps, prefer that the whole subject should be blotted—the sooner, the better—from the memory of man. We cannot indulge their humour. These great questions ought to be discussed, and we feel that we are only acting in obedience to the hallowed principles on which Truth rallies her friends to her cause, and Wisdom is justified of all her children, when we present our feeble contribution upon the same altar on which Dr. Breckinridge in the Speeches before us has offered his gifts. All that we ask is a patient hearing; and if we shall be able to add nothing to the defence of our doctrines, we hope that we shall detract nothing from the spirit of the Gospel.

The precise issue which is involved in the Quorum question, the subject of Dr. Breckinridge's First Speech, has not

been distinctly apprehended by all who have written or spoken upon the subject.[1] The General Assembly of 1843 decided "that any three Ministers of a Presbytery, being regularly convened, are a quorum competent to the transaction of all business agreeably to the provision contained in the Form of Government, ch. x., sec. 7."[2] The same principles of interpretation which exclude Elders from the quorum of a Presbytery will exclude them also from the quorum of a Synod, or of the General Assembly; so that it seems to be the doctrine of our highest judicatory that every court above the Church Session may be lawfully constituted and proceed to any and to every kind of business without the presence of Ruling Elders.

Dr. Breckinridge, on the other hand, maintains that, according to the fundamental principles of our government, "no assembly of the Church, whether it be congregational, classical or synodical, can be regularly, legally or completely constituted without the presence of Ruling Elders as members thereof."[3] The question, therefore, is not whether Elders, in the strict and proper acceptation of the term, are *essential* to the *being* of a Presbytery or Synod, so that these courts could under no circumstances exist or perform any valid ecclesiastical acts without them, but whether any such courts can be "*regularly*, *legally* or *completely* constituted without their presence as members thereof." As Ministers properly ordained are Presbyters, and as a Presbytery is essentially a college of Presbyters, it hardly admits of argument that a Presbytery *may* be composed exclusively of Ministers. And, upon the same principle, as Ruling Elders, according to our system and the Scriptures, are Presbyters, and a Presbytery is nothing but a college of Presbyters, it is equally obvious that a true Presbytery may be composed exclusively of Ruling Elders. Each of these partial bodies

[1] There was much confusion in the minds of the speakers on both sides in the General Assembly of 1843, if we may judge from the printed reports of the debates.

[2] See Minutes of the Assembly of 1843, p. 196.

[3] See First Speech, Presbyterian Government, etc., p. 12, closing minute.

is *essentially* a Presbytery, and each, under extraordinary circumstances, may exercise the powers of a court of Jesus Christ. The occasional Councils of New England which ordain Pastors and install them in their charges are temporary Presbyteries; and though we do not regard them as scriptural, regular or complete, yet their proceedings are not to be invalidated, since they have retained the *essence* of the court. In an unsettled or formative condition of the Church, Presbyterial acts may, from the necessity of the case, be performed by assemblies defective in their elements, excluding either Ministers or Elders. And yet these acts, though irregular and inconsistent with the order of a settled constitution, are not to be despised as void. For upward of four years after its formation the First Presbytery of the Secession Church of Scotland—the Presbytery of Erskine, Fisher, Moncrieff and Wilson—consisted of none but Ministers.[1] No churches had withdrawn from the establishment, and these venerable men felt themselves justified from the extraordinary circumstances of their case in introducing anomalies which their historian confesses to be departures from Presbyterian practice. A Presbytery without churches to govern or Sessions to be represented is certainly irregular; and yet who would vitiate the acts by which the foundations of the purest church in Scotland were laid? When the question therefore is, What *constitutes* the *essence* of a Presbytery? what *must* be found that any body may be entitled to the distinction of this name? the answer obviously is, Neither *Ministers* nor *Elders*, but simply *Presbyters*, irrespective of the classes to which they belong. But to affirm that because a court consisting exclusively of Ministers may be essentially a Presbytery, therefore in a settled church-state such courts are to be treated as legitimate and proper, carries no more force than to affirm that because a court consisting exclusively of Elders may be essentially a Presbytery, therefore such courts are also to be treated as

[1] McKerrow's History of the Secession Church of Scotland, vol. i., p. 224.

legitimate and regular. The question is not, What *makes* a Presbytery, absolutely considered under any and under all circumstances, that without which it could not possibly exist nor discharge the least ecclesiastical function? but, What is *the* Presbytery to which in a settled state of its affairs Christ has committed the government of His Church—the Presbytery defined in our Standards and essential to the adequate operation of our system? The question, in other words, is, under what circumstances a convention of Presbyters, according to the principles of our government, which are also the principles of the Word of God, becomes not simply a Presbytery, but a *legitimate, regular, complete* Presbytery. The doctrine of the Assembly is, that any *three Ministers* regularly convened—convened in conformity with the provisions of the Constitution—are a *lawful* Presbytery, and, according to our system of government, competent to the transaction of all presbyterial business. The doctrine of Dr. Breckinridge is, that though it may be a Presbytery, yet such a convention is not "a regular, legal or complete Presbytery." This we apprehend to be the precise state of the controversy.

To say that the General Assembly has not decided that three Ministers regularly convened are a *lawful Presbytery*, but that they are only the *quorum* of a Presbytery, is a verbal evasion which is nothing worth. "*Quorum*," says Bouvier, in his Law Dictionary, "used substantively, signifies the number of persons belonging to a legislative assembly, a corporation, society or other body required to transact business."[1] The word is strictly Latin, the genitive plural of a pronoun, and came into use as a common noun in our language from a clause in the second branch of the commission of the peace accustomed to be issued by the Crown of England in which the powers of justices when assembled in sessions are created and defined. "We have also," is the clause in question—"we have also assigned to you, and every two or more of you, *of whom* (QUORUM) any one of you,

[1] S. V. Quorum, vol. ii., p. 322.

the aforesaid A, B, C, D, etc., we will shall be one, our justices," etc.[1] And the sessions cannot be held without the presence of two justices at least. This number constitutes the court, and is as truly and really such as if every justice were present. The quorum of a Presbytery is therefore the Presbytery which the law, under the circumstances of the case, has created and defined. It is the number of persons which is necessary to organize the court and to do the business which appropriately belongs to it, and is as truly and really and lawfully the court as if *every* member were present. If a quorum only should meet at the time and place appointed, its proceedings would be recorded as the proceedings of the Presbytery; its acts would be reviewed as the acts of the Presbytery, and no one would refer to it in any other terms than as the meeting of the Presbytery. This point Dr. Breckinridge has set in a very clear light:

"What, sir, is a *quorum?* Gentlemen talk and write as if it were a fifth court of the Church, or rather a sort of sub-court to every church assembly. If Ruling Elders are essential to the composition of a Presbytery, and a quorum of a Presbytery is actually and potentially a Presbytery; then, by the terms of the proposition, Ruling Elders are essential to the formation of this quorum. If a quorum of a Presbytery is not a Presbytery, actually constituted and competent to proceed to business, then to assert that it can do all the business of a Presbytery is utterly absurd and self-contradictory; or else it is the erection of a new court, which can do all the business of a Presbytery without being a Presbytery, which is contrary to common sense, to the Constitution and to the Scriptures. And yet, sir, it is upon quibbles and evasions like this that men having a character in the Church are content to rest the defence of acts and principles subversive of the order of God's house! It ought to be, and I suppose is, well known to the members of this court that many law-processes take their names from the first or other prominent words in them. Thus we say *habeas corpus*, *capias ad satisfaciendum*, *fieri facias*, *venditioni exponas*, *venire facias*, etc., etc., designating by these terms writs in common use and well understood. Such is the origin of our use of the word *quorum;* the king by his writ appoints certain persons to particular duties or offices, of which persons (*quorum*) he specifies in his warrant certain

[1] Penny Cyclopædia, vol. xxi., under the word *Sessions.*

individuals or a certain number as competent to act, or required to be present. The rule of common sense and universal practice, in the absence of any such specific provision, in regard to deliberative bodies at least, necessarily is *lex majoris partis*—the law of the greater number; less than the majority not being, in the eye of reason, the body itself, and the majority being capable of determining the question, even where all are present."[1]

With this explanation of the meaning of *quorum*, the real point in dispute is evidently, as we have stated, whether in a settled church state, or under the operation of our own system, a classical or synodical assembly can ever be *lawfully, regularly, completely* constituted without the presence of Ruling Elders. This question may appear to be very minute; but, as Dr. Breckinridge properly observes, "in point of fact, the ultimate principle involved is one of the most important and comprehensive that could be submitted to the people of God. In deciding it, we virtually decide whether our Church Constitution establishes a government under which the final power and the actual authority are in the hands of preachers *as preachers*, or, of the body of the Christian people to be exercised through officers regularly connected with them; and, as we confess that our Constitution derives its binding force from its accordance with the Word of God, the question at last is between a Divine hierarchy and a Divine commonwealth."[2] This is indeed a "question whose fearful scope is manifest upon every page of the history of Christianity;" and if, as Dr. Breckinridge affirms, it be directly or indirectly involved in the apparently insignificant decision of the General Assembly upon the quorum of a Presbytery, they are anything but agitators and needless disturbers of the Church who are trying to rouse attention to the magnitude of the interests at stake.

The Speech of Dr. Breckinridge may be divided into three parts. In the first he considers the distinctive principles of our system, and shows that they are directly contradicted by the decision of the Assembly; in the second he refutes the arguments by which the resolution of the Assem-

[1] First Speech, Presbyterian Government, etc., p. 6. [2] Ibid., p. 3.

bly has been defended; and in the third he proves that the whole question is a *res adjudicata*, having been long ago determined, not only by the Church from which we have copied most largely in the preparation of our own forms and Constitution, but also by our own Church itself in the memorable transactions of 1837.[1] We need not say that upon all these points his arguments seem to us to be clear, conclusive and irresistible. The Speech, taken as a whole, is the best treatise, within the same compass, upon the peculiar features of Presbyterian church government with which we are acquainted. Its tone is manly, earnest and energetic, and there are parts in which it is distinguished by that high and elevated eloquence which can only be attained when the language uttered is the spontaneous dictate of the heart. That such a speech could have been delivered by a man concealing purposes of low and paltry ambition under the garb of zeal for the glory of God and the purity of His Church, can only be maintained by those who can see no difficulty in ascribing the pathos and simplicity of Judah, when pleading for Benjamin arraigned before Joseph, to affectation and pretence. The language of the heart cannot be mistaken. When truth and nature speak, there is a mysterious power in the tones which widely distinguishes them from the finest efforts of art and study.

As a specimen of what we mean, we give the peroration of the First Speech, which, it seems to us, must, upon every unsophisticated mind, produce the impression that, however mistaken he may be in his opinions, Dr. Breckinridge is a man of God solemnly intent upon the great end of his calling, and occupies a position of moral grandeur even in the midst of his errors. If there be any who can read the passage without sympathy or emotion we envy them neither their hearts nor understandings:

"For my part, there is but one course which I can adopt. It does

[1] The first part extends from p. 3 to p. 5; the second from p. 5 to p. 9; and the last from p. 9 to the conclusion—the whole speech occupying twelve pages, closely printed with very small type in double column.

not satisfy my conscience to be told that the construction which is to work this destructive change was adopted by a great majority of the Assembly; that it is approved by the leading men and institutions of the Church; that learned civilians pronounce it correct; that foreign Ministers have been consulted and have acceded to it. It does not deter me to be threatened with the pains of an incendiary and the penalties of a church-disturber. It does not remove from my path one ray of light, nor shake in my heart one firm resolve, to have predicted defeat and threatened ignominy set before me in the most distinct and appalling forms. I have borne much in the service of this Church: I am willing to endure more. I have stood for the truth when fewer stood by me than I can count to-day. Make this cause as desperate as you please, as degraded as you can—make the danger to me and to the Church as imminent as the most confident of those against me can desire or the most timid of those with me can dread—and still I will take the risk and meet the peril. When the army of the king of Babylon beleaguered Jerusalem, the very Prophet who in the face of death itself and with the brand of a traitor upon him for his fidelity denounced the doom of the wicked city, paid down in the very courts of his prison the price of the field that was in Anathoth, and subscribed the evidence and called witnesses, and with all precision and formality redeemed the spot, it may be, on which the victorious army of the Chaldeans was encamped; for he knew that houses and fields and vineyards would be possessed again in the land of Israel. Sir, I will take courage from this sublime example. Let this Synod say the Church is not a free commonwealth established of God, but is a hierarchy, which my soul abhors, and I will meekly, I trust, but yet resolutely, deny that the Synod utters God's truth. Let the great institutions which rule the Church, and the great men who conspire with them, assert with one accord that we are a hierarchy and not a free commonwealth, and I will still lift up my humble voice against their loud and unanimous cry. Let the General Assembly of the Church, if such be the will of God, angry at us for our sins, adjudge for a hierarchy and against a commonwealth, and, while I must respect even the errors of that venerable court, I will set my poor name against its adjudication, and let posterity decide betwixt us. Let the Ruling Elders themselves, overborne by the clamour or seduced by the caresses of the Ministers, prove insensible to their calling and negligent of the sacred trust reposed in them by God and God's blood-bought people, and even this fearful apostasy shall not shake my immovable purpose to defend the spiritual freedom of the Church, while there remains one inch of ground on which I can plant myself. For surely I trust in God that this sudden, amazing and widespread stupor which has seized the officers of the Church and blinded them to the true character of our institutions, and under whose baleful influence a line of

conduct and a course of observation so remarkable have been adopted in this Synod and elsewhere, cannot be perpetuated; and that sooner or later the Church must return to her ancient landmarks, the distinguishing and vital principles of her polity."[1]

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION MARIN CC

As we shall not have occasion to refer again to that part of Dr. Breckinridge's Speech in which he illustrates the current of previous decisions, we shall present it to our readers in his own words. Prescription, it is confessed, never amounts to more than a presumption, and is strong or weak according to the wisdom, integrity and learning of the party on which it ultimately rests, and the intelligence and freedom of those who have subsequently acquiesced in its authority. The natural effect of it is to throw the burden of proof upon those who desire to introduce a change. As the wisdom and experience of the past are, in some sort, pledged to established institutions, established customs and established opinions, it is rashness to assail them unless they are obviously contradictory to reason, propriety and truth. But still, what has been done has not necessarily been well done, and hoary error is not, like the hoary head, to be treated with veneration. Novelty, on the other hand, is only a presumption against a proposition, weak or strong according to the likelihood of its previous discovery, upon the supposition of its truth. Opinions are not to be condemned simply because they are new, but the burden of proof falls upon their authors; neither are they to be received simply because they are old, truth and falsehood resting upon higher grounds than naked presumptions. The weight which is due to the precedents industriously collected and clearly presented by Dr. Breckinridge the reader may determine for himself, one thing being certain—that the charge of innovation upon which so many changes have been rung lies not against him, however violently the contrary has been asserted, but against the Assembly of 1843.

"I will now, sir, advance a step further, and show that the act of the last Assembly is contrary to the clear and well-settled construction

[1] Presbyterian Government, etc., p. 12.

of the law of the case—that it is directly contradictory of the established construction of our own and the Scottish Constitutions upon this important subject. The whole matter is *res adjudicata*, and the decision of our last Assembly is as completely aside from the whole current of decisions as I have shown it to be of fundamental principles. According to the settled law of the Scottish Church, every church-court in which Ruling Elders do not sit is illegal, and all its acts are null. Steuart of Pardovan declares that neither the Constitution of the Church nor the law of the land in Scotland authorizes 'any other ecclesiastical judicatory but Assemblies, Synods, Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions, or their Committees, consisting of Ministers and Ruling Elders;' that no '*ecclesiastical judicatory, or committee thereof*,' 'can be lawful without *consisting of both Ministers and Elders*,' and he expresses a doubt whether the State would recognize or correspond with any bodies not thus composed.[1] The Assembly of 1638, the most memorable except that of 1843 that ever met in Scotland, annulled as utterly illegal no less than six preceding and as they called them 'pretended Assemblies,' to wit, those of 1606, 1608, 1610, 1616, 1617 and 1618. Amongst the reasons assigned for this immense stretch of authority, in five out of six cases, one reason is that there were no Ruling Elders in these Assemblies; in some none being lawfully commissioned, in others none lawfully sent.[2] The Assembly of the following year, in an elaborate statement entitled 'Causes and Remedie of the By-gone Evils of this Kirk,' addressed to the king, assign as the fifth cause of past troubles the six fore-cited Assemblies, which they pronounce to have been corrupt, null and unlawful, amongst other chief reasons because they were 'called and constituted quite contrary to the order, Constitution and uninterrupted practice of the Church ever since the Reformation, by all which Ruling Elders did rightly constitute a part of lawful General Assemblies.'[3] The law, as laid down by Pardovan, extends even to Commissions and Committees of the church-courts, which differ from each other in this, that the former may examine *and conclude*, while the latter can only examine *and report;* and I have discovered a very curious fact strongly illustrative of the subject now before us in which the Commission of the Scottish Assembly of 1643, in appointing a special Commission of itself, had its attention directed to the very principles for which I now contend, and fully recognized them in one of the most interesting acts, and in its issues one of the most important, ever performed by a church-court. It was on the occasion of appointing the Scotch Com-

[1] Collections, p. 68; book i., tit. 15, sec. 29.

[2] Printed Acts of Scottish Assemblies, pp. 8-14; Pardovan, book i., tit. 15, sec. 1, p. 57.

[3] Printed Acts, p. 75, Assembly of 1639.

missioners to the Westminster Assembly. Baillie, who was one of them, tells us that he moved in the meeting of the Commission of the Assembly that some Elders should be placed on the Commission about to be sent to Westminster, but he adds, 'I gott not a man to second me, yet the absurditie and danger of such ane omission pressing my mind, I drew up reasons for my judgment, which I communicat to Argyle and Warristone, and when they had lyked the motion I went so about it that at the next meeting it was carried without opposition.'[1] These 'reasons,' more fortunate and effectual than reasons usually are, have come down to us, and are worthy still to be pondered. The one which is immediately pertinent to my present argument is in these words: '4. The excluding of Ruling Elders from a Commissione of this nature *may call in question the validity of the Commissione, may hazard the approbatione of it by the next General Assemblie*, may give just offence to all Ruling Elders, may make all the actions of these Ministers more unpleasant, and of lesse authoritie with the bodie of any natione.'[2] The result was the recognition of the universality of the principle that Ruling Elders must regularly be members of all assemblies whose constituent parts are Preaching and Ruling Elders, and even of all Commissions and Subcommissions of them, whether general or special; and three Ruling Elders, the Earl of Cassalis, Lord John Maitland and Johnstoun of Warristoun, were united with the Ministers Henderson, Douglas, Rutherford, Baillie and Gillespie as Commissioners on the part of the Kirk of Scotland to the Westminster Assembly. All this is the more remarkable when we compare the phraseology of the Scottish Standards with that of our own, and the construction of the language with the construction adopted by our late Assembly. In the printed Acts of the Scotch Assemblies I have before me repeated acts of the successive Assemblies from 1638 to 1649 appointing their standing 'Commissione for the public affairs of this Kirk.' These acts name first a large number of Ministers, then a large number of Ruling Elders, who are directed to meet on a day certain at a place fixed, and afterwards 'as they shall think good;' and then 'gives and grants unto them, *or any fifteen of them, there being twelve Ministers present*, full power and commission, etc.'[3] Here is a case far stronger for the exclusion of Elders, who are not even named as a part of the quorum, than can be produced out of our Standards, and yet of such cases as this, Pardovan asserts that unless Elders are present the Commission is illegal,[4] and

[1] Baillie's Letters and Journals, vol. ii., p. 55, Edinburgh, 1841.

[2] Baillie's Letters and Journals, vol. ii., p. 479.

[3] Printed Acts for 1643, p. 209; see also pp. 147, 223, 318, 361, 434, etc., for the Commissions of other years, where the same phraseology is used.

[4] Collections, p. 68.

Baillie informs us that in this identical Commission, of which he was a member, so many Ministers '*and three Elders made a quorum.*'[1] In regard to the quorum of Presbytery, the case is even more striking, for 'to perform any classical act of government or ordination there shall be present *at least a major part of the Ministers of the whole classis*,' says Pardovan, and yet, says the same authority, this very Presbytery is illegal, unless Ruling Elders be also present.[2] That is, by the Scottish Standards, in the quorum of a Presbytery there must be at least the major part of all the Ministers of the body, nothing being said in this relation of Elders, but seeing it is a fundamental principle of the whole system that Elders enter into the composition of every court, they are upon that principle held to be indispensable here, and are so adjudged to be. But our Standards fully recognize and assert the same general principle, and moreover particularly name Elders in the special clause about a quorum as members presumed to be present, and yet our Assembly concludes that they need not be present at all! The State-Church of monarchical Scotland, with rules less manifestly clear for the rights of the especial representatives of the Christian people, declared steadfastly and clearly for those rights, ages ago; while the free Church of republican America, with every general principle and every special enactment of its Constitution strongly and manifestly for those high and important rights, decides even at a time like this, earnestly, yea, indignantly, against them; nay, a storm is raised against the presumption of vindicating what are stigmatized as *Brownist*, *radical* and *revolutionary* doctrines, and even many of the Elders themselves are amongst the very foremost in destroying their own sacred liberties! Surely these things are calculated to arrest the public attention, and to create a profound anxiety in the minds of all those who know how difficult it is to preserve the purity of free institutions and to maintain the spiritual liberties of mankind.

This extraordinary decision of our General Assembly, and the violent efforts made to uphold it as just and wise, are the more surprising when it is remembered that it is contrary to former decisions of our Church. From the earliest period of this Church in America the Collections of Pardovan have been its rule of discipline, and the general principles therein embodied recognized as essentially our own;[3] and that work was made the basis of a portion of our present Standards when they were compiled.[4] Although, therefore, it may have been true in the forming and unsettled state of the Church, and especially amid the difficulties created by a bloody and protracted national

[1] Letters and Journals, vol. ii., p. 97.

[2] Compare book i., title xiii., sec. 1, p. 44, with tit. xv., sec. 59, p. 68.

[3] See printed Minutes of the Presbyterian Church, p. 519.

[4] Idem, p. 535.

struggle for freedom in which our whole Church embarked with the country as one man, that occasional departures from strict rule were unavoidable, yet these irregularities could do little harm so long as the law remained unaltered and clear against them, and the sentiment of the Church was right—as the places I have cited clearly prove it was up to the period when our present Standards were compiled, fifty-five years ago. Upon the law of those Standards, as written, I have already spoken fully. That law, as expounded, presents little or nothing to countenance, and a mass of proof against, the interpretation of the last Assembly. Even the early and monstrous violation of the Constitution by the formation of the *Plan of Union* of 1801 so far respected reason and truth, that no pretension was made that the contemplated arrangements were either regular, constitutional or permanent. That Plan as it relates to the present question virtually abolished the office of Ruling Elder; and if there is one point upon which this Church has pronounced an irreversible judgment, it is that that Plan was utterly null and void from the hour of its inception up to the declaration of that nullity, thirty-six years afterward, by the Assembly of 1837. It is true the controversy which resulted in this decision involved other questions of doctrine, and questions of practice as well as questions of church-order, and I am ready to admit that in all my efforts—and no man made more—to reform the Church at that period, the question of order was never considered by me the paramount question. But the fact is recorded palpably and beyond denial upon all the proceedings of that period, civil and ecclesiastical, that the controversy was settled mainly on the point of church-order. There were great irregularities and there were great heresies, no doubt, to be removed, but these could not make the *Plan of Union* unconstitutional: they could only make it improper. But the Assembly of 1837 annulled that Plan as unconstitutional, and then declared the four Synods out of our connection for the reason that they were illegally constituted and illegally continued by and under that void Plan. In what respect, sir? Why, sir, the Churches, the Presbyteries and the Synods were declared to be not Presbyterian mainly upon the very point this day involved. They had no Ruling Elders, and therefore were not Presbyterian. And whoever will carefully study the acts of the Assembly of 1837—its answers to protests, its official letters, the whole current of its proceedings—will find the stress of the whole question laid upon church-order, and the hinge of the whole case in the question debated before you this day. Upon this ground, more than upon any other, it was triumphantly carried through that great Assembly, through the Church at large, and through the civil tribunals of the country. Sir, I was an actor in all those scenes. I have personal knowledge of what I assert. The records of the Church

and of the country bear me out in what I say. And I now tell you, I tell the Church, I tell posterity, that if the decision of the Assembly of 1843 is law, the decisions of the Assembly of 1837 are not law. If it is law that Ministers without charge make a Presbytery, a Synod and an Assembly—for the decision covers all this—then it was illegal, it was monstrous, to separate four entire Synods from the Church upon the pretence that even Ministers with charge cannot without the presence of Ruling Elders constitute church-courts which can constitutionally belong to this Church. They might deserve, upon other grounds, to be separated from us, but it could not be true that for this defect they never were with us, or of us, if this defect is no defect. It is vain to say the disowned Synods had no Elders appointed in any of their churches: the fact is otherwise—there were Elders, more or less, in many churches, and as it regards the Presbyteries and Synods, the fact of presence, not the fact of existence, is the sole fact in the case. For my part, sir, I stand by the reform of 1837, by its principles and by its acts. I pronounce the decision of 1843 a counter revolution; and I unhesitatingly denounce it as at once compromising the character of the Church, subverting the fundamental principles of its polity, prostrating the rights of the Elders and endangering the spiritual freedom of the people."[1]

1. Our first argument against the decision of the Assembly is, that IT CONTRADICTS THE WHOLE ANALOGY OF PRESBYTERIAN POLITY. It is common to assert that our government is a Commonwealth, but with few exceptions those who have written upon the subject have failed to enter into the full meaning of the truth. As a political system Presbyterianism has always been in advance of the age, and it is only in recent times, under the plastic hand of modern refinement and civilization, that some of its characteristic principles, embodying a deep political philosophy, have developed their power and found their way into the Constitutions and governments of States. It is a noble panegyric which Milton pronounces upon a free Commonwealth—that it "is not only held by wisest men in all ages, the noblest, the manliest, the equalest, the justest government, the most agreeable to all due liberty and proportioned equality, both human, civil and Christian, most cherishing to virtue and true religion, but also (I may say it with greatest proba-

[1] Presbyterian Government, etc., pp. 10–14.

bility) plainly commended, or rather enjoined, by our Saviour Himself to all Christians, not without remarkable disallowance and the brand of gentilism upon kingship."[1] But when we proceed to inquire, What are the securities which a Commonwealth presents that the great purposes of government—justice, liberty, safety, protection—shall be adequately answered? the scheme of Milton must be pronounced to be grossly defective. "The happiness of a nation," says he, in developing his plan, "must needs be firmest and certainest *in full and free council of their own electing*, where no single person, but reason only, sways."[2] The same doctrine is repeated in another passage of the same admirable treatise: "For the ground and basis of every just and free government (since men have smarted so oft for committing all to one person) is *a general council of ablest men chosen by the people* to consult of public affairs from time to time for the common good."[3] This great council, however, was to be a permanent assembly; even the dependence on the people which the system of partial rotation would create, analogous to that which obtains in the Senate of the United States, is condemned by him as having too much affinity with the wheel of fortune.[4] It is a strange inconsistency that he should make the principle of representation the cardinal principle of a Commonwealth, to which it is indebted for all its excellence, and from which it becomes "the noblest, the manliest, the equalest, the justest government, the most agreeable to all due liberty and proportioned equality," and yet enervate the whole virtue of the system by corrupting his body of representatives into an elective oligarchy. The attention of this great man was so much absorbed in the evils of monarchy and a hereditary peerage that, in his anxiety to avoid them, he overlooked the arrangements which experience shows to be essential to the efficacy and perfection of representative assemblies. His specula-

[1] Prose Works—The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth. Royal octavo edition, by Ball. London. p. 444.
[2] Ibid., p. 445. [3] Ibid., p. 446. [4] Ibid., p. 446.

tions were directed rather to the circumstances which would give skill, readiness and competency to the rulers than to limitations and restraints upon the exercise of their power and to the tendency which power always has to corrupt its possessors. He indulged in the glowing vision of an immortal Commonwealth, rich in the experience of ages and generations, and losing nothing from the death of its Senators, as the main body would continue permanent and unimpaired. His council was to be both foundation and main pillar of the State, and secure and immovable as foundations and pillars behove to be.[1]

But while we condemn Milton's views in reference to the mode of applying the representative principle, he clearly perceived upon what its peculiar value depends. Its excellence, as he suggests in a passage already quoted, consists in the probability which it furnishes that reason only shall sway. The danger of democracy is from the passions and the ignorance of the people; the danger of monarchy from the caprices, the tyranny and the ambition of the king; and, the danger of an oligarchy from the selfishness incident to privileged orders. *Reason*, whose voice is the will of God, is much more likely to prevail in a deliberative assembly composed of men who, coming from the people, know their interests, their desires and their fears, and whose measures are adopted under a full sense of the responsibility incurred. The great problem of political philosophy is to devise a Constitution which shall give the amplest security for individual rights, the amplest scope for the development of man's nature in all its important relations, which shall approximate most nearly in all its purposes and plans to the true, the just, the good. In other words, a Constitution which should provide in every case that only *reason* should prevail would, as Milton intimates, be absolutely perfect. It is a great mistake to suppose that the end of government is to accomplish the will of the people. The State is a Divine

[1] Prose Works—The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth, p. 446.

ordinance, a social institute, founded on the principle of justice, and it has great moral purposes to subserve, in relation to which the Constitution of its government may be pronounced good or bad. The will of the people should be done only when the people will what is right. The representative principle is a check upon their power, an expedient to restrain what would otherwise be an intolerable despotism within the limits of an authority which they are bound to respect—the authority of right.[1] There is no misapprehension more dangerous than that which confounds representative government with the essential principle of a pure democracy. It is not a contrivance to adapt the exercise of supreme power on the part of the people to extensive territory or abundant population—to meet the physical impediments which in large States must obviously exist to the collection of their citizens in one vast assembly. It is not because the people *cannot* meet, but because they *ought* not to meet, that the representative council, in modern times, is preferred to the ancient convocations in the forum or the market-place.[2] Power has a natural tendency to settle into despotism; and the legitimate ends of the State may be as completely defeated by the absolute power of the people, in

[1] See Lieber's Political Ethics, vol. i., book ii., §§ 113, 114. We make the following extract: "Here, then, we find the great principle of a representative government, even in a democratic republic. It is not because the people are too numerous, and cannot any longer assemble in the market, as in the ancient republics, that representative governments are advisable, or have become necessary, merely by way of expediting business; but it is on the very same principle that a monarch who interferes himself and does not leave matters to their proper authorities, even in absolute monarchies is considered to act despotically, that the people, if they hold the supreme power, must not act themselves, but ought to act through agents. He who has power, absolute and direct, abuses it; man's frailty is too great; man is not made for absolute power."

[2] "We, the people," says Dr. Lieber, "are not absent from the legislative halls, because, for local reasons, we cannot be there, but because we ought not to be there as *people*, as *mass*, for the same reason that in monarchies the king is not allowed to be present in the halls of justice, or as the legislators cannot debate in the presence of the monarch."—Political Ethics, vol. ii., book vi., § 8.

the absence of proper checks and restraints, as by the absolute power of a single ruler. Absolute power is tyranny, whether in the hands of large masses, of privileged orders or of single individuals; and a government which aspires to be free has made but slender advances when it has only changed the seat of authority. The representative principle is accordingly to be prized, not as an approximation to a pure democracy, but as an independent institution, having its own peculiar advantages, not the least of which is to guard against the evils incident to popular masses.[1] The hindrances which, in the one case, exist to the discovery of truth are, in the other, removed. It is an expedient to secure the ends of government without the inconveniences to which every other institution is subject. Its assemblies are essentially deliberative, and its processes are correspondingly cautious.

That a government may secure, in the largest degree, the prosperity and happiness of the people, two conditions seem to be essential—an accurate knowledge of their circumstances and wants, and a fixed purpose to aim at the collective interests of the whole. The representative plan fulfils both conditions: the first, by entrusting the election of representatives to small communities, so that each portion of the country may possess an organ to express its own wishes and desires; the second, by making each representative, while he is the organ of a narrow section, the representative, at the same time, of the whole State. The wants of all are made known, and, by wise and free discussion, the measures which ought to be adopted to promote the interests of the whole are likely to be elicited. As the excellence of representative assemblies consists in the probabilities they furnish that the legitimate purposes of the State shall be the objects of government, and that the measures adopted shall be those

[1] For a masterly exhibition of the real nature and advantages of Representative Government, see Lieber's Political Ethics, vol. ii., book vi., from § 6 to the close of the first chapter. Compare also Brougham's Political Philosophy, vol. iii., chap. viii.

which reason approves, it is obvious that the perfection of the system will be increased by imposing checks upon these assemblies themselves, and raising barriers within them against the impulse and excitement into which even senates are sometimes betrayed.[1] Accordingly, the freest modern States have adopted the principle of *two chambers*, composed of different persons, belonging to different classes, or elected for different terms of service. This is a vast improvement upon the single council of Milton. It gives to the representative system the fairest scope for its legitimate exercise, and provides the strongest security which the wit of man can devise against the violence of party, the predominance of passion, selfishness or local interests, and the tyranny of unscrupulous majorities. In modern times no one would regard a government as completely representative whose Legislature was confined to a *single* chamber. The irregular influences to which pure democracies are subject would be likely to enter so largely into it that it could not be consistently denominated, according to the conception of Milton, a free Commonwealth.

The introduction of two chambers is perhaps as great an improvement upon the representative principle as the repre-

[1] The following remarks of Lord Brougham are commended to the attention of the reader:

"We have seen how important a security against the mischiefs of popular assemblies is afforded by the representative principle. But this is not sufficient, for the assembly of the representatives themselves is, though in a much less degree, subject to the same risks of misdecision from ignorance, deception, passion. Therefore the supreme power, even when entrusted to representatives, must, for the safety of the people, and for the same reasons which require the delegation, be exercised in a certain fixed manner and under certain material restraints, voluntarily imposed, and which may be varied at any time if found inconsistent with freedom and with popular rights.

"The three principal checks upon rash and erroneous decisions are therefore these: delay interposed between any proposition and its final adoption; the requirement that it be submitted to more than one body of popular representatives; and the independence of the bodies entrusted by the people, within reasonable limits consistent with their being responsible."
—Political Philosophy, vol. iii., chap. xiii., p. 99.

sentative principle itself upon that of deputies in the middle ages. The one is the offspring of the progress of society, as independent communities and petty principalities and estates became fused into the national mass and imbued with a national life; the other is the offspring of the spirit of liberty, seeking its firmest protection in the moral restraints which reason and truth, and reason and truth alone, impose.[1]

This description of a Commonwealth in the State is an exact picture, in its essential features, of Presbyterian government in the Church. The very principles which the progress of modern society has developed, and which constitute the glory of modern politics, were found imbedded in the Presbyterian system ages before a representative republic, in the true sense of the term, existed upon earth. The ecclesiastical platform of the Scriptures embraced those very doctrines of political philosophy through which nations are now rising to greatness, ancient dynasties are falling into ruins, and liberty is beaming on the world.

The first characteristic principle of our system is, as Dr. Breckinridge largely proves,[2] that the government of the Church is not in the hands of individual officers, nor yet in the hands of the mass of the people, but in the hands of officers chosen by the people, judicially convened: in other words, the cardinal principle of our polity is the government of the Church by free representative assemblies. This distinguishes us from Prelacy on the one hand and Independency on the other. Other denominations may agree with us in rejecting a distinction of orders in the ministry of the Word, but if they entrust jurisdiction and discipline to single Presbyters, excluding parochial, classical and synodical assemblies, they cannot consistently be called Presbyterian. Ours is a government, not by *Presbyters*, but by *Presbyteries;* and if we deny that such assemblies are essential to

[1] For the distinction between deputies and representatives, see Lieber's Political Ethics, vol. ii., b. vi., chap. ii.; Brougham's Political Philosophy, vol. iii., chap. vi.

[2] Presbyterian Government, etc., pp. 3, 4.

our system, we deny at the same time that our system is a Commonwealth.

In the next place, in the composition of our assemblies the same principle is embodied which has led free States, in the constitution of their Legislatures, to introduce two chambers. As the end in human governments is to promote the objects of the State, the representative system is adopted as being the most likely to reach the verdict of truth and reason. The Legislature must know the wants, the necessities, the desires of the people; and hence representatives are *chosen*, and chosen from comparatively small sections, that the condition of the whole country may be adequately known; but as the interests of the whole society are supreme, as right and justice are the highest expediency, each representative, while he makes known the wants and exigencies of those who have immediately sent him, is bound to act for the collective community, and to do what, under the circumstances of the case, his constituents *ought to* desire. To guard more effectually against the supremacy of will, and to preserve the supremacy of right, the representative principle checks itself against the dangers to which all assemblies are exposed, and diminishes the chances, in multiplying councils, of the irregular influences of passion, interest and party.

In the government of the Church, as the assemblies which exercise jurisdiction and authority are *judicial* as well as deliberative, are *courts* as well as councils, and therefore very frequently required to act as an unit, it would be a cumbersome arrangement to have two houses; but the end is accomplished in two classes of representatives and in the relations to each other of the bodies which they constitute. The Ministers are a check upon the Elders, and the Elders are a check upon the Ministers, and the higher are checks upon the lower courts. The object of the check is to promote the discovery of truth by bringing different views and different modes of thought into collision, by securing the certainty of a full and free discussion, and diminishing the probability that party interest or temporary prejudices shall pre-

dominate in the result. Its efficacy does not depend upon the mode in which the representatives are chosen, nor the term of service which they are required to fulfil: these are only circumstances which the Constitutions of States have defined as likely to secure that variety of opinion and that discrepancy of feeling which are essential to adequate deliberation. They are signs of the check, but not the check itself. When a council is composed of those whose previous education, whose daily habits, whose employments and pursuits, whose prejudices and feelings, whose associations and opinions are widely different, though they may all sustain the same relation to their constituents, and hold their office by the same tenure and for the same length of time, still the spirit of what Lord Brougham[1] denominates *a perfect check* is unquestionably preserved; and this is pre-eminently the case in Presbyterian courts. A government exclusively in the hands of the ministry is fraught with dangers to them and to the people, against which all ecclesiastical history is a solemn warning; and although as long as the Ministers were truly chosen their assemblies would be enough to give the Church the form of a Commonwealth, the spirit of liberty would soon depart. The possession of power would produce its natural effects, the ministry would aspire to be a privileged class, and *the people* would soon lose the significance and importance which the legitimate operation of our system attaches to them.[2]

[1] Political Philosophy, vol. ii., chap. ii., p. 13.

[2] The following reasoning of Dr. Miller against committing the government of single churches exclusively to Pastors applies as strongly to the government of the whole by councils of Pastors. The class and the individual will be distinguished by similar tendencies. "But even if it were reasonable or possible that a Pastor should alone perform all these duties, ought he to be willing to *undertake* them, or ought the church to be willing to *commit* them to him *alone?* We know that Ministers are subject to the same frailties and imperfections with other men. We know, too, that a love of pre-eminence and of power is not only natural to them, in common with others, but that this principle, very early after the days of the Apostles, began to manifest itself as the reigning sin of Ecclesiastics, and produced first Prelacy and afterward Popery, which has so long and so

On the other hand, a government exclusively in the hands of the Elders would lean too much to popular will. Mingling habitually with the people, and identified with them in their relations and interests, their habits and associations, the Elders might be disposed to regard themselves as mere deputies, and to aim at local and sectional advantages rather than the good of the whole Church. Ministers, on the other hand, trained to habits of retirement and study, and accustomed to meditate upon abstract principles and general truths, while they furnish precisely the sort of check which the inconveniences of a government of Elders seem to demand, create a danger against which in turn Elders are the only adequate security. But with our double representation ecclesiastical despotism and popular passion are equally discouraged.[1] Local and sectional interests are not

ignobly enslaved the Church of Christ. Does not this plainly show the folly and danger of yielding undefined power to Pastors alone? Is it wise or safe to constitute one man a despot over a whole church? Is it proper to entrust to a single individual the weighty and complicated work of inspecting, trying, judging, admitting, condemning, excluding and restoring without control? Ought the members of a church to consent that all their rights and privileges in reference to Christian communion should be subject to the will of a single man, as his partiality, kindness and favouritism, on the one hand, or his caprice, prejudice or passion, on the other, might dictate? Such a mode of conducting the government of the Church, to say nothing of its unscriptural character, is in the highest degree unreasonable and dangerous. It can hardly fail to exert an influence of the most injurious character both on the clergy and laity. It tends to nurture in the former a spirit of selfishness, pride and ambition, and instead of ministers of holiness, love and mercy, to transform them into ecclesiastical tyrants; while its tendency with regard to the *latter* is gradually to beget in them a blind, implicit submission to clerical domination. The ecclesiastical encroachments and despotism of former times, already alluded to, read us a most instructive lesson on this subject. The fact is, committing the whole government of the Church to the hands of Pastors alone may be affirmed to carry in it some of the worst seeds of Popery, which, though under the administration of good men they may not at once lead to palpable mischief, will seldom fail of producing in the end the most serious evils both to those who govern and those who obey."—*Miller on Ruling Elders*, chap. viii., p. 176. Edition of 1831.

[1] Anderson, in his defence of Presbyterian Church Government, has

disregarded, the voice of the people is heard; but the checks and balances of the system are so nicely adjusted that the strongest probability is furnished which any conceivable arrangement, dependent for its execution upon fallible men, can give that the voice of Christ shall be supreme in all

taken a similar view of the case, though the relation of Ministers to their people is not that of princes to their subjects.

"And indeed the wisdom of our Lord and His care of His Church is very much seen in the institution. For as He has appointed Ministers that the faith of the Church may be kept sound, and Deacons that the wants of her poor members might be supplied, so He has appointed Ruling Elders to oversee the manners and outward conversation of Christians that they be such as become the Gospel. Besides, by this constitution the discipline is the more willingly submitted to by the people, being exercised by persons chosen from among themselves, appointed to represent them, to take care of their interest, and that they may have no reason to complain of the rigour or severity of the Ministers. To illustrate this a little from the constitution of the civil government: Princes ordinarily live in state, see nothing but coaches-and-six, fine rooms and full tables, nor does anybody appear before them but in his Sunday's clothes. All this is very necessary and reasonable, yet it leaves them very much unacquainted with the condition of the country; nor can they have other than a very faint sense of the pressures and calamities their people may be groaning under. And were the legislature solely in their hands, they could hardly escape being blamed for everything the people might think a grievance. But now, when a parliament meets once a year, the prince gets the condition of the people in the most remote corners of the kingdoms represented, and the people cannot but be satisfied when they consider they are governed by no other laws, nor burdened with other taxes, than what were asked and enacted with their own consent, or, which is the same thing, by representatives of their own choosing. Just so Ministers through their retired course of life are ordinarily very much strangers to the way of the world, and are ready to measure the world by the abstract notions they have gathered out of books, or from their own solitary musings, which do not always suit with the practical part of life. Hence, it comes to pass that till age and experience have mellowed them, they are apt to have too much keenness on their spirits, and to express too much rigour in their actings. But Ruling Elders are more conversant in the world, know better what the times will bear, and what allowances are necessary to be made in this or that case. Now, when the people (in the case of scandal) see themselves judged by such persons, and that there is no other discipline exercised on them but what even their own neighbours, as well as their Ministers, think reasonable, they can have no just cause of complaint."—Pp. 209, 210. Edinburgh, 1820.

our courts. We cannot, therefore, attach too much importance to the office of Ruling Elder in its relation to our church-courts. Upon it the security of our liberties mainly depends; it is the principal means, under God, of making the Church not only a Commonwealth, but a *free* Commonwealth, the "noblest, manliest, justest, equalest" government on earth.

The combination of these two principles—the government of the Church by representative assemblies, and the double representation which obtains in them, may be styled the *analogy* of our system, and whatever is inconsistent with either of them, though there may exist no positive statute to forbid it, is inconsistent with our Constitution. The argument against it is of the same sort as that which convicts of heresy any method of justification, though not specifically condemned in the Bible, which comes into collision with the righteousness of faith; or, which brands with reprobation any species of conduct, though not expressly rebuked in the Scriptures, which is contrary to the spirit and temper of the Gospel. It is enough, in the one case, to say that the new doctrine contradicts the analogy of faith, and, in the other, the new practice the analogy of holiness; and, upon the same principle, whatever is repugnant to a government of courts, composed of two classes of representatives, contradicts the analogy of Presbyterianism. Our Standards contemplate the full development of the representative system, with all its checks and securities. It aims at the execution of the law of Christ in its application to the varying circumstances and exigencies of His people, and they have provided equally that the law shall be expounded without the prejudices incident to a mass or the dangers incident to a class; they have accordingly prescribed assemblies, in conformity with the Word of God, in which the desires of the people shall be known without being permitted to be supreme. Double representation is the safeguard of our system, and so completely pervades all its arrangements that it is with manifest reluctance even

Sessions are permitted to be constituted without the presence of a Minister.[1] But the Assembly has decided that in classical and synodical assemblies one class of the representatives described in our Standards may be wanting, and yet the law be preserved. It tells us that our courts of Review and Control may be constituted, and regularly constituted, without the presence of the Ruling Elder, that our representative system is unimpaired when one of its material elements is removed. As well might a State Legislature undertake to enact laws without the presence of one of the chambers. Our system contemplates Ministers and Ruling Elders in every superior judicatory; the Assembly declares that the Elders may be dispensed with. If there be not a contradiction here to the whole analogy of our government, we are incapable of determining what that analogy is. If there be not a mutilation of the perfection and symmetry of our scheme, we have mistaken the grounds on which its value and excellence depend.

In the constitution of our courts with two classes of representatives, we have given the world an example of the operation of a principle the application of which, in the government of States, is justly regarded as the boast of modern civilization; and yet we are suddenly infatuated to trample our priceless jewel in the dust as a thing of naught. The Presbyterianism which the Assembly has sanctioned is a maimed and partial thing—as different from that of our Standards and the Standards of all the Presbyterian Churches as a statue is different from a man. The form of a Commonwealth may exist under it, and will continue to exist as long as the Ministers are Pastors; but the vitality is gone, the arteries of the body become withered and dried, the very moment Ruling Elders, fresh from the people, with feelings, habits and interests which identify them with their constituents, are removed from our courts. We cannot but think that it is a rash and ill-considered resolution which would impart the whole power of the Presbytery, under any cir-

[1] Form of Government, chap. ix., § 4.

cumstances ever likely to happen in a settled church-state, to three ministers, and yet this has been done by the General Assembly of the freest Church in the world. We have been gravely told that since a Presbytery is left to us no violence is done to the law. As well might the people of South Carolina, or any other free State in which the Legislature, consisting of two chambers, receives the general name of *Assembly*, be induced to believe that the acts of a single branch, passed and ratified in the absence of the other, were constitutional and binding because they were passed by a body which was a real and true Assembly. An Assembly it might be, but it was not the Assembly which the fundamental laws of the State contemplate; and so this thing of three Ministers may be a Presbytery, but it is not *the* Presbytery of the American Standards.[1]

This, then, is our first argument: The resolution of the Assembly contradicts the whole analogy of our government; it mars the perfection of our representative system; it removes one of its most important securities, and leaves the Church in the hands of rulers who are least acquainted with the details of its interests and strongly tempted, in the absence of salutary checks, to pursue abstractions or to exalt themselves into a privileged class. It is remarkable, too, that the officers whose presence is rendered unnecessary are precisely the officers whose sole business it is to rule. We have appointed them, in conformity with the Word of God, for a particular department of duty, and then gravely declare that this department can be conducted legally and

[1] The constitution of our courts has been supposed to be analogous to the constitution of the British House of Lords, which consists of the spiritual and temporal peers. But the analogy fails in a very material point. The organization of our assemblies should be compared, not to that of a single house, but to the constitution of the Parliament—the *whole* legislative assembly. Each court with us is a *complete* judicial assembly, and must therefore be compared to corresponding assemblies only *as* they *are complete*. If the British Legislature could be constituted without the Lords, by the Commons alone, or, without the Commons, by the Lords alone, then the analogy would hold, and Presbyteries might be constituted without Ruling Elders.

properly without them. There is an inconsistency in such proceedings; violence is done to our Standards, and no majorities can make it right.

When we consider the multitude of Ministers without charge, the facility of increasing their number, and the lax discipline which permits them to exercise the full power of scriptural Bishops, the danger seems to us more than imaginary which threatens the balance of our system when Elders are treated as comparatively unimportant. Though valuable at all times, they are particularly needed when senators are admitted to our councils who have never been chosen by the people, except upon a principle which Brougham pronounces to be inconsistent with representative government—the principle that the Presbyteries are virtually electors in the case, and that their choice is putatively the choice of the Church.[1] It is a wise maxim to resist the beginnings of evil. To give the ministry the power of multiplying their own number according to their own discretion is to present a temptation which should not, without inevitable necessity, be offered to fallen humanity to exercise irresponsible authority, and to seek the elevation of an order rather than the general interests of the universal Church. The danger might be slow in its development, but it is the undeniable experience of the world that power unchecked tends to abuse, and will ultimately corrupt the sincerest men. We can dispense with none of the securities for the liberties of Christ's people, least of all with that which has placed our system, in every age of its existence, immeasurably beyond the standard of earthly politics, and which in proportion to their approximations to it has rendered States free, prosperous and happy. To dispense with Elders in the assemblies of the Church is to sever the chords which bind the hearts of our people to their government, and to prepare the way for converting a free, vigorous and healthful Commonwealth into a sacred aristocracy. We should pause on the threshold. Perpetual vigilance is the price of liberty, and the recorded experience

[1] Political Philosophy, vol. iii., chap. ix., p. 63.

of the past abundantly proves that from the slightest and most insignificant beginnings stupendous results have proceeded. We are far from supposing that there exists, among any, a deliberate design to destroy the liberties of the people, or to degrade the eldership, or to corrupt the ministry, or to effect any radical change in our system. We cast no imputation upon the motives of those who concurred in the resolution of the General Assembly, but their purposes are one thing and the tendency of their measures another. And, as we believe before God that they have established a doctrine which may be pushed in coming generations to consequences which we shudder to contemplate, we feel bound in conscience to resist the evil in its birth. The direct increase of power is less dangerous, because less insidious, than the removal of a salutary check.

The forms of ancient despotism may never again be revived, but there is an evil worse than tyranny which may be produced by alienating the affections and confidence of the great body of the people from the persons of their rulers. The Church or State which is reduced to this deplorable condition is without strength or energy, like the body when the nerves have lost their power and the vital functions their tone. There is a public opinion of society, not to be confounded with momentary impulses or the impetuous dictates of temporary passion, which lies at the basis of all efficient, healthful, successful government. In this the laws find their strongest sanction, and no institutions can be permanently safe which contradict or fail to receive a cordial response from the sentiments of those who are immediately affected. The public opinion of the Church must be consulted by its rulers; and while they should hold themselves above the paltry influences of popular clamour or popular whim, they should earnestly seek to understand the undercurrent of feeling and thought which pervades, animates, strengthens and consolidates the whole body of God's children. There are chords of sympathy which they must touch if they would make their government a living, effect-

ive reality. This cannot be done without some adequate representation on the part of the people. It deserves, therefore, to be considered whether, if our assemblies should continue to be held and the outward forms of our present government observed, the system could be preserved in life, energy and tone, when Ruling Elders shall have lost their interest in the department to which they are specially called. When they depart from our courts the sympathies of the people will depart with them. A calamity so portentous should render us cautious how we trifle with measures which may have even a remote tendency to disturb the relations of the people to their rulers, and to arrest the free circulation of opinion through all the veins and arteries of the ecclesiastical body.

In every view of the case, therefore, the resolution of the Assembly seems to us to be dangerous. It is a violation of the spirit of our system against which expediency as loudly remonstrates as the sacred voice of law.

II. Our second argument, which turns upon the same general principle with the first, is drawn from the fact that the simple question concerning the expediency or fitness of calling a special meeting of the Presbytery cannot be determined, according to a positive provision of law, by *all the Ministers together, without the concurrence of two Ruling Elders* belonging to different congregations.[1] This consideration was urged in the Assemblies of 1843 and 1844, both in the debates and protests of those who dissented from the opinions of the majority and in the able speech before us. To our minds it possesses great force. Whatever reason may be assigned for the introduction of the clause which contains the law, it will apply as strongly to the constitution of the Presbytery as to the preliminary point whether it shall be constituted at all at a given time and place. If the design were to guard against rash and inconsiderate meetings, it seems a little unreasonable to assert that Ministers

[1] Form of Government, chap. x., § 10.

have not prudence to be trusted with the subject of the convention of a Presbytery, while they have all the wisdom which is necessary to transact all its business. To say that the purpose was to guard against the possibility of meetings without the knowledge of most of the members of the court is to overlook the provision which requires that adequate notice shall be given to every Minister and church. Why, then, has the clause been inserted? Most evidently to preserve the cardinal principle of our system—the principle of double representation.

There are two aspects in which this clause may be deemed to be decisive of the point in dispute. In the first place, it furnishes an argument from the less to the greater—*ex minus probabili ad magis*—a species of reasoning which in the ordinary affairs of life is regarded as conclusive. If so slight a matter as the expediency and propriety of a special meeting of the body cannot be decided without the concurrence of *both classes* of representatives; if *all the Ministers together*, however distinguished by learning, piety and prudence, cannot even *determine* to meet without the approbation of the Elders; it violates all the measures of probability to affirm that the Constitution which has guarded, checked and restrained them in relation to a point comparatively unimportant, has yet given them plenary powers in relation to the very thing which makes a meeting important or unimportant—the business to be done. There is something ludicrous in declaring in one breath that they are incompetent to say whether a meeting ought to be held or not, and then affirming, in the next, that they are fully competent to conduct the weightiest affairs in the kingdom of God. What is it but a paradox to assert that three Ministers, when regularly convened, are presbyterially omnipotent, and yet that these three Ministers are insufficient to call a meeting of the body which they themselves can make? They can constitute the body in fact, but they cannot *agree* to do it!

In the next place, the resolution of the Assembly renders it possible that Presbyteries shall be organized which, under

the Constitution, shall not be possessed of the power to call a special meeting—a state of things which our fathers evidently never contemplated. The doctrine is that three Ministers, whether with or without charge, may constitute a Presbytery; and as, in the present state of affairs, it is a lamentably easy matter to find places and districts which, though destitute of churches, contain the requisite number of ordained men, it is possible under this new law to organize Presbyteries without Christian people to be governed or Sessions to be represented! Whatever can make a quorum can make a Presbytery; and if Elders were not indispensable to the one, the other can exist without them. But how shall these churchless Presbyteries call a special or extraordinary meeting? The law requires the concurrence of two Elders, but these Elders they have not. Here, then, is a singular anomaly, and the *possibility* of such a case under the regular operation of our system is enough to condemn the law which renders it conceivable. "It is the settled doctrine of our Church and of all other reformed Churches," as Dr. Breckinridge truly remarks,[1] "that the right to convene in Church assemblies, both stated and *pro re nata*, is Divine, inherent and absolutely independent of the civil power;" and hence our Standards never could have contemplated the existence of a body which by their own provisions is deprived of this right.

III. As there is a positive presumption, arising from the general analogy of our system and the spirit of a particular provision of our law, against the decision of the Assembly, clear and overwhelming evidence would seem to be demanded in order to justify it. This presumption is increased by the consideration that in the absence of an express provision to the contrary no quorum, according to the ordinary principles which regulate the case, *could* be formed without the presence of a Ruling Elder. In all cases in which an act is to be done by a definite number of

[1] Presbyterian Government, etc., p. 6.

persons, "a majority," according to Bouvier, "is required to constitute a quorum, unless the law expressly directs that another number may make one."[1] It is evident that, according to the letter of our Standards, a majority never could be obtained exclusively of Ruling Elders. That they should be deprived of a privilege which, independently of positive law, they would obviously possess, and deprived of it in contradiction to the whole genius of the Constitution, is an improbability so violent that nothing short of very clear and unanswerable proof ought to be deemed sufficient to remove it. Now, the only semblance of proof is found in the language of the Constitution pleaded by the Assembly itself, "that any three Ministers and as many Elders as may be present belonging to the Presbytery, being met at the time and place appointed, shall be a quorum competent to proceed to business."[2] The question is, whether the terms *and as many Elders as may be present belonging to the Presbytery* so obviously extend to the case in which *no* Elders shall be present that they cannot be fairly and legitimately construed upon any other hypothesis. It is not a question whether they *may* include this case, but whether they *must* include it. Unless the interpretation of the Assembly is necessary and irresistible, another ought to be adopted which shall reconcile the language with the general current of the law. Does the phrascology, then, according to its natural, simple, inevitable import, contemplate the *absence* of Elders or not? If we may credit Dr. Rice,[3] this form of expression was selected to obviate the difficulty of those who, in the absence of such a provision, might be tempted to doubt the legality of a meeting in which the Elders outnumbered the Ministers. It is certain that under any probable operation of our system this is a case which may often happen; and if it were indeed the intention of

[1] Law Dictionary, vol. ii., s. v. Quorum.

[2] Form of Government, chap. x., § 7.

[3] See his speech in the Assembly of 1844, reported in the Protestant and Herald of June 20, 1844.

our fathers to meet this specific case, it is evident that they not only contemplated the presence of Elders, but the presence of *more* Elders than Ministers. Under this view the language is a prohibition to Elders to organize the Presbytery without the presence of at least three Ministers; it is a restriction in favour of the Ministers, and implies a state of things precisely the opposite of that which the Assembly has inferred from it. We are told by the Assembly of 1844[1] that the intention was to provide for all the contingencies that might occur, which are accordingly reduced to four—the case when no Ruling Elders are present; when the number of Ministers exceeds that of Ruling Elders; when the numbers are equal; and when the Elders exceed the Ministers. That the rule extends to the last three cases we cheerfully concede; but that it includes the first rests upon nothing but naked, unsupported authority. The whole question is a question of interpretation, and the point is to arrive at the idea in the minds of those who framed the Constitution when they adopted this particular language. Were or were they not thinking of the case in which no Elders should be present? We can determine the point only by reference to instances in which similar phraseology, adopted under analogous circumstances, has a clear and undisputed meaning. We are free to confess that examples may be produced in which these or equivalent expressions, *independently interpreted*, will bear the sense which is defended in the present clause. But then the instances are not precisely analogous. In the case before us there is an antecedent presumption against the interpretation in question. This throws the burden of proof upon those who make it, and they are required to produce examples in which, against the pressure of a similar presumption, like phraseology has a like meaning to that for which they contend. Now, this we believe to be impossible; and as all admit that the disputed clause provides for cases in which Elders *are* present in whatever numbers, the absence of proof that it

[1] Printed Minutes, p. 387.

provides for any other contingency is conclusive on the point. We can call to mind no instances which will justify the decision of the Assembly, but we can conceive of those which are precisely against it. If a master had ordered a portion of his servants to go to a particular place, as our Standards require Elders to be present at Presbyteries, and then should subsequently command three others and as many as might be at the specified place to execute a given task, would his language imply, would it be the idea in his mind, that there might, after all, be no servants there? Our fathers have drawn a Constitution under the provisions of which it is always likely that there shall be more Elders than Ministers at Presbytery, and yet we are gravely told that in the framing of a clause which confessedly implies the *presence* of Elders their *absence* is the prominent point contemplated. The interpretation of the Assembly is evidently not a necessary one, and accordingly, upon the true principles of the case, ought not to be received. The meaning of the law should be drawn, not from verbal technicalities nor from strained and arbitrary inferences, but from a candid comparison of its letter with the whole spirit and genius of the Constitution. The doctrine of the Assembly requires something more to support it than the naked possibility that the words *may* mean what they have been interpreted to teach. They *must* mean it, or the doctrine is tacitly condemned. If they are capable of *any* explanation consistent with the analogy of our system, the laws of sound criticism demand that this explanation should be adopted. It seems to us preposterous to affirm that because the clause which contains the definition of a quorum may, when independently interpreted, suggest the inference that the presence of Elders is not essential, this inference is to be taken as the true meaning of the passage, in gross contempt of the fundamental principles of the instrument in conformity with which the quorum is permitted to act. We have yet to learn that what logicians are accustomed to denominate a *fallacy, the argumentum a posse ad esse*—the argument from

possibility to fact—is sound enough to bear the weight of tremendous innovations upon an established Constitution, and to justify what would seem to unsophisticated minds the guilt of depriving rulers of their rights.

The Second Speech of Dr. Breckinridge, to which it is time we should advert, is devoted to the question whether or not Ruling Elders, when members of Presbytery, are entitled to lay on hands in the ordination of Ministers of the Word. The Assembly of 1843 had decided that neither the Constitution nor the practice of the Church gave them any such authority,[1] and the Assembly of 1844, in reaffirming the decision, has pronounced ordination to be a "*rite*," and has treated it simply as "*a declaratory ministerial act.*"[2] The point in dispute, therefore, involves the very nature of ordination; and in the different stages of the controversy two distinct issues have been presented. The *first* is whether, upon the supposition that ordination is an act of government and belongs to the power of jurisdiction and not of order, there be not something so peculiar in it that the only rulers who are competent to execute it are Ministers themselves. This is the form in which the subject was first submitted to the Church.[3] It was generally conceded that ordination was the act of a court—that it was neither analogous to preaching, nor to the administration of the sacraments, nor to any other function which pertained to Ministers in their individual relations as Preachers of the Word. It was a joint and not a several power.[4] This principle

[1] Printed Minutes, p. 183. [2] Ib., p. 370.

[3] We do not mean to assert that no one had yet expressed the views of the Assembly of 1844; but the controversy, for the most part, was conducted on the assumption that ordination pertained to jurisdiction. We recollect but a single speech in the Assembly of 1843 that distinctly denied this doctrine: many contended in general terms that it was a *ministerial* act, evidently meaning that Ministers were the only rulers competent to execute it.

[4] Ecclesiastical power is divided into two kinds—the power of order, *potestas ordinis*, and the power of jurisdiction, *potestas jurisdictionis*. The first is called *several* power, because it can be exercised by any individual who belongs to the order without the concurrence or co-operation of

being undisputed, the question arose whether it pertained to the court as *a whole* or only to those members of it who possessed the office to which the candidate was about to be set apart. There were two leading grounds on which the doctrine of the Assembly of 1843 was defended—first, That ordination confers ministerial authority, is a sort of spiritual generation of spiritual teachers, and therefore *can* be bestowed only by those who already possess it, upon the obvious principle that a man cannot give to others what he has not himself; secondly, That ordination pertains only to scriptural Presbyters, and that, as Ruling Elders are not the Presbyters of Scripture, they have no right to unite with the Presbytery in the performance of a strictly presbyterial act. This seems to us to have been the state of the controversy when the Assembly of 1844 met. That Assembly has made *another* issue by denying that ordination is an act of government at all, by pronouncing it to be a *rite*, and by referring it to the category of order rather than jurisdiction. In every aspect of the case the characteristic principles of our system are involved. To admit that ordination is the act of a court, and to exclude any class of members from participation in it, is to raise a question concerning the nature of the office and the extent of the rights with which these members are invested. No one has ever attached the least degree of importance to the circumstance of the imposition of hands by the Ruling Elders of Presbytery as a simple matter of fact. It is the *principle* on which their right has been denied—whether it respects the nature of ordination or the nature of their office—that has given the subject all its interest and value. It is certainly a matter of some moment to determine what ordination is. The consequence attached to it by Prelatists and Papists, the bitter controversies it has occasioned in the Church, and its obvious relations to the authority and duties of the ministry, require that we should at

others; the other is called *joint* power, because it can only be exercised in conjunction with others—that is, in some ecclesiastical court. See Second Book of Discipline of the Kirk of Scotland, chap. i.

least be settled in our own views as to what constitutes its essence. Our Church ought to have a definite testimony; and yet their recent agitations have revealed the melancholy fact that upon this whole subject our language to each other, to other Churches, and to the world is as confused and contradictory as the dialects of Babel. It is also a matter of some moment that the office of Ruling Elder should be clearly apprehended. Is he a mere deputy of the people, clothed with delegated power, and only the organ of the constituents who elect him? Or, is he an officer divinely appointed, clothed with jurisdiction by the authority of God and elected by the people to discharge the duties which Christ has connected with his office? Is he or is he not the Presbyter of the Scriptures? These surely are not slight questions: they affect the very heart of our system; and in deciding them we settle the distinctive principles of our government. Whether or not Ruling Elders shall ever exercise the right, which we contend belongs to their office, of imposing hands in the ordination of Ministers, is a matter in regard to which we are profoundly indifferent: we are content to leave them to their own discretion; and so we are equally indifferent whether any *Minister* besides the Moderator shall engage in the same act. But when it is asserted that they are precluded from this or any other presbyterial function by the very nature of their office or the peculiar character of the service, then principles are involved which possess a magnitude and importance proportioned to the excellence of the Presbyterian polity in contradistinction from every other mode of Church government. Then we are required to say whether we believe with the Papists that ordination is a sacrament; with the Prelatists that it belongs to the power of order; with the Independents that it belongs to the people; or with the great body of the Reformed Church that it belongs to the power of jurisdiction, is an act of government, and must be administered by the legitimate courts of God's house. Then we are required to say whether Ruling Elders are lawful members of ecclesiastical courts, are the

Presbyters of Scripture, or are mere intruders into Congregational, Classical and Synodical assemblies. We are required, in other words, to say whether we are Presbyterians or not.

Slight and insignificant, therefore, as the question may appear to be in itself, in its collateral issues it involves considerations which justify all the gravity and importance which have ever been attached to it. The minutest pimple on the face is a fit subject of alarm when that pimple is the symptom of a cancer.

The points which Dr. Breckinridge discusses in the speech before us are, "that the whole work of the ordination of Ministers of the Word belongs regularly and properly to a Presbytery composed of Preaching and Ruling Elders, and that the Presbytery which should impose hands is the same as that which performs all the rest of the work of ordination."[1]

His doctrine, in other words, is that ordination is an act of government and appropriately belongs to the rulers of God's house judicially convened, that it is the exercise of joint and not of several power, and cannot be restricted to one class of Elders more than to another. *Every* Elder who is a member of the court, whether he be a Preacher or not, may participate in the execution of the act.

This Speech, like the former, may be divided into three parts. The first presents what may be called the constitutional argument; the second illustrates the propriety and fitness of the provisions of our Standards on which the constitutional argument depends; and the third is devoted to the doctrine of other Churches in reference to the point in dispute, as this doctrine is gathered from the authorized symbols of their faith.[2] Any language which should at all be proportioned to our convictions of the ability with which these topics are discussed would, to those who have never

[1] Presbyterian Ordination not a Charm, etc., p. 29. Minute submitted to the Synod.

[2] The first part extends from p. 14 to p. 17; the second, from p. 17 to p. 20; and the third, from p. 20 to the close. The whole speech occupies sixteen closely-printed pages.

investigated the subject, seem to be extravagant. It is impossible to read the Speech without being struck with the power it displays. Nothing but inveterate prejudice or obstinate perverseness of mind can deny that a cause which has enlisted so much talent, and such noble earnestness and zeal, is entitled to worthier treatment than that of being dismissed with a sneer.

What we have styled the constitutional argument embraces four points: 1. The express language of the law is pleaded which concedes to the Presbytery, and to the Presbytery as a whole, the power to ordain, to remove, to install and to judge Ministers. 2. The inconsistency of denying to Ruling Elders the right of uniting in the imposition of hands, when they are obviously entitled to bear a part in every other portion of the work, is exhibited. 3. The fallacy is exposed which, from the language put into the mouths of the members after the ordination has been performed, would restrict the Presbytery, to which the Constitution has entrusted this office, exclusively to Ministers. 4. The presumption against the right of Elders, arising from its inconsistency with the general practice of the Church, is satisfactorily removed. In the first place, this presumption is shown to lie as strongly against other principles which are universally acknowledged to belong to our system as against the proposition in question. In the next place, a very important distinction is suggested between the fact and the inference which ought to be drawn from the fact. It may be granted that Elders, as a general rule, have never been accustomed to impose hands—it has never been their practice; but as other reasons may be conceived which are sufficient to explain the phenomenon besides a denial of their right, that denial is hardly a legitimate, certainly not a necessary, inference from the fact.

To illustrate the manner in which these points are discussed, we shall present extracts bearing upon each in the order in which it has been mentioned.

1. "The main point of this discussion, so far as the question is one

of positive law, is one in regard to which it would seem to be impossible there could be a difference of opinion amongst us. Where is the power of ordaining Ministers of the Word lodged under our Constitution? 'The *Presbytery* has power . . . . *to ordain*, install, remove and judge Ministers.' (Form of Government, ch. x., sec. 8.) What Presbytery? Why, sir, beyond all doubt, that Presbytery which is one of the divinely-instituted assemblies declared in this same Constitution to be invested with power to govern the Church of Christ (ch. viii., sec. 1); that Presbytery defined, in the same chapter which declares its power to ordain, as being composed of many separate congregations, which by their need of mutual counsel invest presbyterial assemblies with their importance and usefulness, and declared to *consist of Ministers and Ruling Elders* (ch. x., sec. 1 and 2); that Presbytery thus constituted, which is so often and so prominently held forth throughout the entire chapter which treats expressly of the ordination of Pastors and Evangelists (ch. xv.); that Presbytery to which, as constituted of the officers called of God to receive the fearful trust of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the power of church censures is committed. (Confession of Faith, ch. xxx., sec. 1 and 2.) This, sir, is the body to which, by language as plain as language can be, the power to ordain Ministers is confided under this Constitution. This power is confided to it *as a body*, not to its individual members—to it as *the* body defined in the instrument itself; and to place the power in any other hands than those of an assembly composed of the Pastors and Ruling Elders of the churches of a particular district, is to act in gross disregard of law which we have solemnly declared we believe to be in full accordance with the revealed will of God, and which we have sacredly bound ourselves by mutual covenants to observe. It is nothing to the present argument whether other ordinations be valid or invalid, though I readily admit them to be for substance good, even when they are irregular in form. It is nothing worth to enter into the questions so largely disputed in the Westminster Assembly about congregations fixed and congregations fluid; about a church-state settled and a church-state unsettled; about the exclusive power of Presbytery and the concurrent power of Presbytery and Consistory or Church-session, in the premises. It is wholly beside the question, as matter of strict argument, what our own Church, even, believed or did before the formation of the present Form of Church Government and its adoption in 1788—as much so as it would be to determine the powers of the present Congress of the United States by the practice or the theory of the government under the old Confederation, instead of doing it by a fair construction of the present Constitution. The true question is, What is the law of this Church as laid down in this Book? And the answer is simple, clear, explicit, that the ordination of Ministers of

the Word belongs under our covenanted system neither to Pastors nor Committees, nor nondescript things called *quorums*, nor church-sessions, nor Synods, but to *Presbyteries;* and not to Presbyteries in the vague and general sense of the term, but to the Presbyteries of this Constitution. Nor can I conceive, sir, that a candid mind can doubt in regard to this point after it has been plainly stated.

"The *formal* parts of this ordination are stated with absolute precision. A fast day ought to be observed in the congregation where the ordination is to take place, previous to it. (Form of Government, ch. xv., sec. 11.) The *Presbytery* being convened, a member ought to preach a sermon, the same or some other member should explain, enforce and recapitulate the case, the person appointed to preside should ask the questions set down to be answered both by the candidate and the people. (Idem, sec. 12 and 13.) 'Then the presiding minister shall by prayer, *and with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery*, according to the apostolic example, *solemnly ordain him* to the holy office of the Gospel ministry.' (Idem, sec. 14.) Who shall ordain him? '*The presiding minister*,' in the name, by the authority, with the concurrence, in the bosom, of the constituted Presbytery, as its Moderator, and not otherwise: so are the words written. Whose hands are to be laid on him that is ordained? '*The hands of the Presbytery*'—so again are the written words. What Presbytery? Why, beyond all the powers of human ingenuity and perversity to gainsay, the Presbytery of this Constitution; the Presbytery of this chapter; the Presbytery that licensed the candidate; the Presbytery that received his call and put it into his hands; the Presbytery that examined him and appointed a day to ordain him, and met for that purpose in the church that called him; the Presbytery that chose one of its Ministers to preach, another to deliver a charge to the people, another to deliver a charge to the new Minister, another to preside at his ordination. This is the Presbytery that lays its hands on him; and to assert the contrary—I say it without intending to give offence—is utter folly. But this Presbytery is a Presbytery which consists of Ministers and Elders—a Presbytery in which one Elder from every congregation in the district has a right to sit as a member. Therefore, by the irresistible force of the very terms of the law, every Elder present and a member of the body is as much bound to lay on his hands as any Minister present can be. Why, sir, would you stultify our fathers? Did they first define with the utmost clearness the term *Presbytery;* then invest the body so called with the power of ordaining Ministers of the Word; then in a long chapter treating of this ordination in detail use the word a dozen times in its defined sense; and then, without notice or motive, use the same word in the same chapter and touching the same business in a sense not only inconsistent with their own definition

of it, and their constant use of it, but in a sense flatly contrary to both? The thing is supremely absurd. We have in this city a municipal government which consists of a mayor and two bodies called jointly the City Council. Suppose the Legislature of this State were to pass an act of fourteen or fifteen sections, defining the power belonging to the municipal government over any particular subject, and directing minutely the manner of its exercise; suppose it should say in one section it meant by the words 'municipal government' the mayor and the two branches of the City Council, and then throughout the act use the words confessedly in this sense, until it came to the fourteenth section, and in it should use the same words in regard to the same matter once more,—now, sir, I demand of you, what would be thought of a man who who could seriously contend that in this case the words 'municipal government,' used in the fourteenth section of the act, really did not mean the mayor and both branches of the City Council, but in fact meant only and singly the first branch? Will you say no man would venture upon so marvellous a folly? Then why, sir, shall we have a thing just as preposterous forced upon the Church in the name of reason, of our Constitution and of the Word of God?"[1]

2. "It cannot escape notice that, if Ruling Elders are denied the right of imposing hands in the ordination of Pastors and Evangelists, it must necessarily follow that they ought to be prevented from taking any part in every other portion of these ordinations. The ground upon which they act in the matter at all, under this Constitution, is that they are declared to be a component part of the Presbytery (Form of Government, chap. x., sec. 2); that the Presbytery is declared to have power to ordain Ministers (Idem, sec. 8); and that 'the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery' is declared to be a formal part of this ordination (Idem, chap. xv., sec. 14); and it is a ground altogether impregnable. If the laying on of hands be the only essential part of ordination or the main part of it, then the more clearly this is proved, the more important it is that Ruling Elders be not illegally ousted of their rights, and the more manifest it is that this right is inherent in their office; since, if this is ordination, this is the very thing they are commanded to do. But, on the other hand, if the imposition of hands is any part at all of ordination, then, manifestly, the body which has the entire power of ordination has power to perform this part of ordination, and therefore Ruling Elders have it upon the same ground precisely that Preaching Elders have it—namely, that they are members of the body to which the right appertains; and to deny this involves either that imposition of hands is no part of ordination, or that ordination is not by the Presbytery, both of which are absurd

[1] Presbyterian Ordination, etc., pp. 14, 15.

and contrary to express law; or, that Ruling Elders may be denied any participation in a part of ordination which is expressly declared to belong to the whole Presbytery; and if this can be done, then they can, on the same grounds, be deprived of all participation in all parts of ordination, and that act ceases to be presbyterial and becomes merely hierarchic, as to every part of it, which is precisely the tendency of the greater part of the arguments I have heard and read on the other side. Furthermore, upon the same grounds precisely, the Ruling Elders ought to be deprived—and if they tolerate the present encroachment, they *will be* deprived at last—of all right to take any part in installing, removing and judging Ministers, as well as in ordaining them; for the whole four powers are of one and the same class, and are embraced and invested by a single clause (Form of Government, chap. x., sec. 8) of the Constitution. There is full as much sense in the notion that an Elder cannot take away the ministerial office because he cannot give it as in that so current amongst us that he cannot give it because he has it not himself; and there is far more reason to say he shall in no case take part in installations than to prohibit the imposition of his hands, since the latter act is only and always presbyterial, while the former one may be done by Committee. (Form of Government, chap. xvi., sec. 6.) And surely it is far more evident that, when Ministers are installed by a Committee of Ministers, Ruling Elders can have no right to take part in removing them, seeing they had none in placing them, than it is that they cannot impose hands in ordination, even though ordination be an act of Presbytery only, and they members of the body. The truth is, sir, the whole matter resolves itself into one of these four propositions: either the imposition of hands is not a presbyterial act, which is exactly contrary to the words of the Constitution; or presbyterial acts may be performed where there is no presbyterial authority, which is absurd and revolutionary; or Ruling Elders, when members of Presbytery, must unite in the act, which is true; or you must show an explicit statement in the Constitution not only that a Presbytery is good without them—which the Synod asserts and the Constitution denies—but that even when they are present they are denied this right, that is, that even when members they are not members."[1]

3. "But, chiefly, the whole sophism rests on an error of fact. The word *ministry* is, no doubt, in its popular use often, perhaps generally, applied to the Ministers of the Word; but our Standards and those of other Presbyterian Churches, and our Bible too, use it technically to mean all the divinely-ordained officers of the Church. Our Confession says, 'Christ hath given *the ministry*, oracles and ordinances of God for *the gathering and perfecting* of the saints in this life to the end of

[1] Presbyterian Ordination, pp. 15, 16.

the world' (ch. xxv., sec. 3), and our Form of Government declares that Pastors, Ruling Elders and Deacons are the ordinary and perpetual officers of the Church, given to it by Christ, as already abundantly proved; therefore these Standards must contradict themselves, or else in them, and so in this place, the word *ministry* does not mean simply the Ministers of the Word. The *Second Book of Discipline* of the Kirk of Scotland is equally explicit: 'According to the parts of this division (to wit, of the policy of the Kirk), ariseth a sort of threefold officers in the Kirk, to wit, of Ministers, *Preachers;* Elders, *Governors;* and Deacons, *Distributors.* And all these may be called by a general word *ministers of the Kirk*' (ch. ii., part 2). Yes, sir, and our brother Paul is more explicit even than our brother Andrew Melville; for knowing that the Master had laid down and enforced, in His own inexpressible humiliation, the great truth that *minister* of the Church and *servant* of the Church are the very same thing, he expressly declares that all the gifts of Him who ascended far above all heavens were for a work which he expresses by a word borrowed from the name of the humblest office in the Church—a *deaconry*, a *ministry;* and seeing that he had called Christ Himself *a minister*, *a servant* for the truth of God, using the same word when he speaks of himself and even of his apostolic office, he goes out of the circle of ecclesiastical phraseology, and selects a word lower than the lowest he could find there, to say, 'So account of us as of the *ministers* of Christ.'"[1]

4. "And as for the pretended practice, what is it? That Elders *shall not* impose hands in the ordination of Ministers of the Word? I deny that any such practice ever did, or, from the nature of the case, ever could, exist independently of clear law, or, if it existed, could be proved in the manner here attempted. That Elders *did not* so impose hands might be a practice and might be proved; but that they *should not* is a long step farther; and the moment this principle has been attempted to be asserted as the sense of the Church, it has created an excitement which it will require better arguments than 'the previous question' to allay. That Elders *did not* impose their hands, *actually*, is asserted with great confidence to have been the uniform practice. The very *general* practice it may have been; the *universal* practice, I have personal knowledge, it was not—and that in portions of the Church the most thoroughly imbued with the principles of our system. That, *potentially*, whoever did impose hands did it as the act of the whole body, and therefore of the Elders in the body, is just as clear as that when the candidate is ordained by the Moderator presiding—as by the words of our Book he is—the ordination is potentially that of the body, and so is presbyterial: and this is one manifest proof of the absurdity of talking about a practice that Elders *should not* impose hands."[2]

[1] Presbyterian Ordination, p. 16. [2] Ibid., p. 17.

Having proved that, according to the plain and obvious meaning of the Constitution, ordination belongs to the Presbytery as a *whole*, and not to a single class of its members, Dr. Breckinridge proceeds to vindicate the law, and shows conclusively, to our minds, that there is nothing in the nature of ordination itself, or in the nature of the Ruling Elder's office, which renders it unfit that he should take part in the service. As we shall have occasion to refer again to the principles involved in this portion of the Speech, we shall content ourselves with a single passage in which the teaching of the Scriptures upon the question at issue, as it was evidently understood by our fathers, is clearly and felicitously presented:

"Our Form of Government, ch. viii., sec. 1 and 2, quotes Acts xv. 6 to prove the government of the Church to be *jure divino* in assemblies Congregational, Classical and Synodical; and then in ch. x., sec. 1, and ch. xi. on the title, it quotes the same passage to prove that, *jure divino*, Classical and Synodical assemblies are composed of Pastors and Ruling Elders. In ch. xv., sec. 14, 1 Tim. iv. 14 is quoted to prove that in ordination the hands of the Presbytery ought to be imposed, and in ch. x., sec. 1, the same passage is quoted to prove that many congregations are united in one Presbytery composed of Pastors and Ruling Elders. So that, holding Ruling Elders to be incompetent to impose hands, we quote a passage which proves that Presbytery ordains by imposition of hands, and quote it again to prove that Ruling Elders as well as Preaching Elders were in that Presbytery! And holding that the power of regimen held by Ruling Elders does not qualify them to act in a manner which falls immediately and absolutely under the power of an assembly having rule, we quote a passage to prove, in the first place, that this assembly has the power of rule, and, in the second, that Ruling Elders were in it! The passage in Timothy puts it out of dispute that the body which ordains is a Presbytery and that it ordains with imposition of its hands, while that in Acts is equally conclusive that it had jurisdiction, and that the Elders who sat in it were all neither more nor less than Presbyters. Here, sir, I may boldly take my stand. These marginal citations clearly prove by Scripture that the doctrine asserted in our Standards is that which I assert before you now, and that the men who put them there and have kept them there understood these Standards to teach this doctrine. Assemblies which have rule in the Church, which are composed of Teaching and Ruling Elders, and are therefore called Presbyteries, ordain Ministers

of the Word, by the imposition of the hands of their members without discrimination. This is the doctrine of these Standards and of God's Word. And, sir, I invoke your solemn consideration of the state of the question to which the whole argument conducts us. The whole office of the Ruling Elder is involved. His power to ordain depends on his power to rule, and they stand or fall together. His position under our Constitution and by the Word of God is determined by the same argument, and will be decided by the same vote. With him falls the grand peculiarity of Presbyterian, and, as I believe, of Christian, church-order."[1]

The last portion of the speech is devoted to the doctrine of foreign Churches. "The *practice* of other Churches," Dr. Breckinridge tells us, "I do not pretend to have sufficiently examined into to speak with confidence about it; nor indeed does it appear to me a point of sufficient importance to be worthy of discussion under the circumstances. . . . . The *doctrine* of other Reformed Churches I have considered as standing in a different light, and have carefully examined it, especially as it is set forth in their public and formal Standards."[2] Independently of the reasons which Dr. Breckinridge has specified for attaching more importance to *doctrine* than to *practice*, it is worthy of remark that general principles are seldom apprehended on their first announcement in the full extent of their application. Though the truth of the universal always includes the truth of the particulars, yet it is possible, it is a fact daily exemplified in the processes of thought, that the general may be received without any adequate conception of the number of particulars it contains.[3] The definitions of mathematics and the leading principles of ethics *contain* all the truths which belong to either science; and yet it is the study of a life to develop in either case the full extent of virtual knowledge which is involved in an assent to the definitions of the one and the fundamental doctrines of the other. The Reformers in many instances, like the Prophets of

[1] Presbyterian Ordination, p. 18.

[2] Ibid., p. 20.

[3] See Whately's Logic, book iv., ch. ii.

Israel, were the heralds of doctrines which they knew to be true because they were found in the Word of God, but whose compass and extent their past associations and established habits of thought prevented them from duly appreciating. Step by step they followed the truth in its vigorous assault upon their settled prejudices and existing institutions, but the whole work of the truth it was not for a single age or a single generation to achieve. It is the duty of after-times to apply their principles, when just, to abuses and corruptions to which their fathers saw not that the principles could be extended. In this process we are not opposing—we are acting in consistency with—their testimony; we are simply hatching the egg which they have deposited. It may, therefore, be true that the founders of the Reformed Churches abroad never in fact reduced to a complete and consistent practice their scriptural doctrine of ordination; and yet this circumstance is by no means a proof that it is incapable of an application which they never made. Their practice may not have been reformed into perfect harmony with their principles. They may neither have seen nor felt the discrepancy, and yet the discrepancy may have really existed. They may not have apprehended all the details which were legitimately embraced under their general statement. Their *doctrine*, therefore, is a surer guide than their practice: it is the mould into which their practice ought to have been cast; and if they failed to do it, we are wanting in reverence for them and veneration for the truth when we prefer what they did not condemn to what they cordially approved.

So far as the point of doctrine is concerned, Dr. Breckinridge has shown that, wherever it is repugnant to the conclusions for which he contends, it is in consequence of principles distinctly rejected in our Standards. This is particularly the case in reference to the Reformed Church of France.[1] He alleges in his favour—and we do not see how his arguments can be resisted—the second or latter Hel-

[1] Presbyterian Ordination, etc., p. 21.

vetic Confession, which he pronounces to be emphatically "*the Confession of the Reformed Churches*," and the Second Book of Discipline of the Kirk of Scotland.[1] He disposes very successfully of the arguments which have been drawn from the formularies published by the Westminster Assembly.[2] He considers in the last place the history of our own Constitution;[3] in which he proves beyond the possibility of doubt that upon the subject of church-order the Scotch, and not the Westminster, Standards were principally followed, and that, in the successive modifications of our system, the principles have been more and more clearly embodied from which his own views seem to result as a necessary consequence.

It seems to us that the opposition to Dr. Breckinridge's theory arises from a twofold error; the first having reference to the nature of ordination itself, and the second to the office of the Ruling Elder. Our limits do not permit us to enter at this time into an extended investigation of these topics, but we shall present, with all the brevity consistent with perspicuity, the results to which our inquiries have conducted us. What, then, is ordination?

It deserves to be remarked, in the first place, that the very term itself obviously implies—what every definition, whether Protestant or Papal, Prelatic, Presbyterian or Congregational, assumes as a conceded proposition—that the ministry of the Gospel is an *ordo*. The different gradations which the Churches of England and of Rome have introduced into the general office of the clergy are accordingly styled *holy orders*. In these applications the word *ordo* is used in a sense analogous to that in which it was employed to indicate the rank of a Roman senator. The clergy, as Knapp suggests,[4] seem to correspond to it, while the mass of the people, the laity, are distinguished from them, not as another order, but by the absence of that which, in the other case, is the ground of separation.

[1] Presbyterian Ordination, etc., pp. 22–24. [2] Ibid., pp. 24–26.
[3] Ibid., p. 26. [4] Lectures on Theology, vol. ii., art. xiii., § 136, p. 494.

Ordination has evidently some relation to this *ordo*, and our views of this relation must depend upon our previous conceptions of the source and nature of that, whatever it is, which constitutes the essence of the order.

According to Rome,[1] three sacraments—baptism, confirmation and orders, impress an indelible character on the soul, which, consisting not in a new and peculiar relation, but in an absolute quality, fits it to discharge the duties of religion, assimilates to Christ, and is a badge of distinction from others. The character, whatever it is, which the sacrament of orders confers, constitutes the difference between the clergy and the laity. There is a mark upon the souls of the one which is not found upon the souls of the other. Orders enrol a man among the leaders of the hosts of the Lord, and communicate the power, as a personal and substantive possession, to distribute to others the blessings of the covenant. In correspondence with this view of the nature of the order, Rome teaches that ordination is a sacrament, and *as* a sacrament actually impresses the indelible character which distinguishes the priesthood. It is that which *makes* a man a priest—the only Divine calling which can justify a creature in ministering at the altar. His ordination and his commission from above are one and the same thing.

According to the divines of the Church of England, the possession of ministerial power, which Hooker[2] does not scruple to denominate "a kind of mark or character, acknowledged to be indelible," is that which entitles a man to the rank of a Minister. "Ministerial power," says the author of the Ecclesiastical Polity, "is a mark of separation, because it severeth them that have it from other men, and maketh them a special *order* consecrated unto the service of the Most High in things wherewith others may not meddle." To introduce a man into orders in the Church of England is to give him authority to execute the func-

[1] Bellarmin, De Effectu Sacramentorum, lib. ii., chap. 19.

[2] Ecclesiastical Polity, book v., ch. lxxvii., § 2, cf. § 7. Keble's edition.

tions which pertain to the ministry. Ordination *confers* the power which constitutes the badge of ministerial rank; and as in the Church of Rome, so in this Protestant communion, it is the only valid commission which a man can legitimately plead to administer the ordinances of God. "Canonical ordination," says Hooker,[1] "in the Church of Christ, is that which maketh a lawful Minister as touching the validity of any act which appertaineth to that vocation." The very words which the Bishop employs in the services prescribed for the occasion are conclusive proof that ordination is regarded as the real communication of a Divine warrant to discharge the duties of a Minister: it creates a right to the *ordo;* it impresses the character or bestows the power which is distinctive of the rank; so that the relation of ordination to the *ordo* in the Churches of England and Rome is essentially the same. Their Bishops undertake in the name of God to call and commission the ministry for its work.[2]

But according to *our* doctrine and the doctrine of the great body of the Reformed Churches of Europe, the right to the ministerial office depends upon the calling of God. A Divine vocation, imparting a spiritual fitness for the work, is the only mark or character which distinguishes the ministry from every other class of men. Those gifts of the

[1] Ecclesiastical Polity, book v., chap. lxxxi., § 12.

[2] We extract the following passage from a Dictionary of the Church by Rev. Wm. Staunton. Ordination is defined to be—

"The act of conferring holy orders or the right and authority to execute the offices of the Christian ministry. Ordination is not to be confounded with the *designating* or *setting apart* of a person to the work of the ministry, for in strictness any one may do this for *himself*, or it may be done for him by his parents, guardians, etc., and involves nothing but what any layman may perform; whereas ordination is the actual *communication of authority* from a legitimate source to execute those functions which appertain to the several orders of the ministry. Neither is ordination to be viewed as the appointing of a person to the spiritual charge of a particular congregation; on the contrary, every ordained clergyman is to be held as a Minister of the Church catholic, and his location in any particular sphere of labour is a mere accident, not affecting the validity or the extent of his spiritual powers."—*Art. Ordination.*

Holy Ghost, that heavenly and powerful unction by which God qualifies His agents for the positions to which He has assigned them, are the only badges of the order which the Scriptures lead us to recognize. Hence, upon our principles, ordination must sustain a very different relation to the *ordo* from that which is ascribed to it in the Churches of England and Rome. As, with us, it is God through the Spirit who imparts the ministerial commission and conveys the right to discharge the duties of the office, as God, and God alone, can communicate the distinctive qualities of the *ordo*, ordination, with us, can only be an acknowledgment of the fact that a man *is* a Minister of God and entitled to rule and to teach in His Church. We do not undertake to put into the hands of Ministers their Divine warrant for their work; we only receive and set our seal to the credentials which God has given. In our use of the term *ordination* and that of the Prelatists there is a difference of meaning analogous to that which obtains between Protestants and Romanists in their use of the much more important term *justification*. To *justify*, with the one, is to make righteous, as to *ordain* is to create a Minister; to *justify*, with the other, is to pronounce righteous, as to *ordain* is to declare a man a Minister. Hence, Presbyterian ordination imparts nothing—whether character, power, grace or privilege. It is neither a charm nor a commission; it is a simple acknowledgment of what God has done. As a right is comparatively worthless whose existence is not recognized by others—the logical maxim *de non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio* being universally applicable—it is of the utmost importance to the success and efficiency of a Minister that his Divine authority be admitted. Hence, God has appointed ordination as a public recognition on the part of His Church of the rights which He has supernaturally conferred. It is the established mode in which it is *made* to appear that He has called and anointed the subject of it for the work of the ministry.

As it is evidently, therefore, the decision of a question of

fact concerning the Divine right of an individual to be ranked in the *ordo*, two elements must enter into it—the investigation of the evidence, and the formal rendering of the judgment. The decision must be made in conformity with the laws of Christ. He has prescribed the principles on which it must depend. He has defined the qualities which characterize the *ordo* and settled the mode in which the knowledge of their existence can be acquired. The whole process in the investigation of the evidence and the declaration of the verdict is only an application of the laws of Christ, and is consequently committed to the same hands with the general administration of government. Ordination is a judicial decision, and therefore belongs to a court. Imposition of hands is the formal rendering of the judgment; and as the judgment is the judgment of the whole court, it must be rendered as the decision of the whole, though a particular individual may be selected as the organ. There is nothing, therefore, in any part of the process, in which a Ruling Elder may not fitly and consistently participate. The point to be determined is a question of fact concerning the right of a given individual to be enrolled in the *ordo* of Ministers. This right depends upon a Divine vocation, imparting a spiritual fitness for the work. This vocation is, in turn, to be determined by the laws which Christ has prescribed in the case. The judgment of the court is reached by calling on each member to express his opinion by a vote; and when the result is known, the judgment is formally declared by the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery. If a Ruling Elder, therefore, has a right to vote in the case, he has also a right to impose hands. They are both expressions of the same judgment, the one being the opinion of the individual as a member of the court, and the other the judicial decision into which that opinion has entered as a component element. Such we apprehend to be the nature of Presbyterian ordination; and every other hypothesis, as it seems to us, must proceed upon the assumption of Prelatists and Papists that it is in the power of man to communi-

cate the distinctive peculiarities of the ministerial order. Every other doctrine must make ordination the *commission* of the ministry. The mystical jargon about the transmission of authority, the communication of power, the delegation of office, is essentially Prelatic; and we can conceive of no theory of ordination which renders it incompatible for an Elder to partake in it, which does not assume that its relation to the *ordo* is that for which Prelatists and Romanists contend.

The other error which we mentioned has reference to the nature of the office of the Ruling Elder. It is becoming common to represent it, not as the immediate appointment and institution of Christ, the only King and Head of the Church, but as the creature of the people, possessed of no other powers but those which they have chosen to entrust to it. The Elder is an organ through which the people exercise the jurisdiction which Christ originally committed to them. He can do nothing but what the people themselves might do, and his office is Divine only in the sense that God is supposed to sanction the act of his constituents in delegating their power to him, instead of exercising it in their own collective capacity. According to this extraordinary theory, the people in mass might constitute, in connection with the ministry, the judicial assemblies of the Church. The Session might be composed, not of the Pastor and Elders, but of the Pastor and the brotherhood. The Presbytery might be composed, not of the Ministers and a Ruling Elder from each church within the bounds of a district, but of the Ministers and the entire congregations of professed believers committed to their charge. Our government, upon this scheme, as it was originally instituted by Christ, and as it might now be *jure divino* practically administered, is an odd mixture of an elective aristocracy—the clergy, and a pure democracy—the people. We have no hesitation in affirming that this whole theory of the origin and nature of the Elder's office is absolutely false, unsupported by a single text of Scripture or a single doctrine of our Standards. Presbyter-

ianism venerates the *rights*, but it is a new thing under the sun to maintain the *judicial power*, of the people. Christ has not committed the government of the Church into their hands. The language of our law is as clear and explicit as language can be made: "The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of the Church, hath therein appointed a government IN THE HANDS OF CHURCH-OFFICERS, distinct from the civil magistrate."[1] Not a word is said about the right of the people to co-operate in all acts of discipline and government. The *potestas jurisdictionis* pertains to *church-officers*. "To these officers" it is added, and not to the people, "the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed."[2] "It belongeth to the overseers and other rulers of the particular churches, by virtue of their office and the power which *Christ* hath given them for edification and not for destruction, to appoint" Synods and Councils, "and to convene together in them as often as they shall judge it expedient for the good of the Church."[3] "Our blessed Saviour, for the edification of the visible Church, which is His body, hath appointed officers, not only to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments, but also to exercise discipline, for the preservation both of truth and duty, and it is incumbent upon these officers, and upon the whole Church in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous."[4]

These passages of our Standards recognize the doctrine of Owen,[5] which we apprehend to be the true doctrine of the Scriptures, that "all church-power *in actu primo*, or fundamentally, is in the Church itself; *in actu secundo*, or its exercise, in them that are especially called thereunto." "He hath instituted," says this great man,[6] "and appointed the offices themselves and made a grant of them unto the Church for its edification. As also, He hath determined and limited

[1] Confession of Faith, chap. xxx., § 1.

[2] Ibid., chap. xxx., § 2.

[3] Ibid., chap. xxxi., § 1.

[4] Form of Government, book i., chap. i., § 3.

[5] Owen on the Nature of a Gospel Church, chap. iii., § 2. Works, vol. xx., p. 378.

[6] Ibid., p. 386.

the powers and duties of the officers. It is not in the power of any or of all the churches in the world to appoint any office, or officer, in the Church, that Christ hath not appointed. And where there are any such, they can have no church-authority properly so called, for that entirely riseth from, and is resolved into, the institution of the office by Christ Himself. And hence, in the first place, all the authority of officers in the Church proceeds from the authority of Christ in the institution of the office itself; for that which gives being unto anything gives it also its essential properties." "It is hence evident," he insists in another place,[1] "that in the communication of church-power in office unto any person called thereunto, the work and duty of the Church consist formally in acts of obedience unto the commands of Christ. Hence, it doth not give unto such officers a power or authority that was formally and actually in the body of the community, by virtue of any grant or law of Christ, so as that they should receive and act the power of the Church by virtue of a delegation from them; but only they design, choose, set apart the individual persons, who thereon are entrusted with office-power by Christ Himself, according as was before declared." While, therefore, "all church-power, which is nothing but a right to perform church-duties in obedience unto the commands of Christ and according unto His mind, is originally given unto the Church essentially considered," yet it has evidently "a double exercise: 1, in the call or choosing of officers; 2, in their voluntary acting with them and under them in all duties of rule."

That the people, and not Christ, are the direct and immediate source of all the power and authority committed to the office of Ruling Elder, is an error which, though it evidently contradicts the express teachings of our Standards, has arisen from a total misapprehension of the title with which they distinguish him, *the representative of the people*. A representative and a delegate are essentially distinct; they differ

[1] Owen on the Nature of a Gospel Church, p. 389.

not merely, as Lord Brougham[1] seems to suppose, in the extent of the subjects on which they are authorized to act, but in the *relation* which they bear to those who elect them. It is not a little remarkable that Brougham should treat "the representative principle as the grand invention of modern times," and yet, in his formal and elaborate definition of it, embody what strikes us as the distinguishing characteristic of a delegate or deputy. It "consists," he tells us,[2] "in each portion of the same community choosing a person, to whom the share of that portion in the general government shall be entrusted, and not only the administration of the affairs of the whole as related to other communities, or the administration of the affairs of each portion in its relation to other portions of the State, but the administration of all the concerns whatever of that separate portion." The problem, according to this definition, to be solved by representative government is the accommodation of the principles of pure democracy to extended territory or abundant population: it is an artificial arrangement by which the regiment of masses is approximated when it cannot be attained; and the excellence of the whole system depends upon the degree in which this result is secured. The representative of Lord Brougham and the deputy whom he had previously described, and from whom he expressly distinguishes his representative, differ only in the *extent* and not in the *nature* of their commission. Their relation to those who appoint them is precisely the same. But we contend that the officers are radically and essentially distinct.[3] A deputy is simply the *locum tenens* of his principal, the creature of instructions which he cannot consistently transcend—a substitute, and nothing more. A representative, on the other hand, is a confidential agent, pursuing the dictates of his own understanding, and bound to act in conformity with his own private

[1] Political Philosophy, vol. iii., chap. vi., p. 31. [2] Ibid.

[3] The ablest and clearest discussion of this subject which we have ever seen is in Lieber's Political Ethics. We refer particularly to vol. ii., book vi., concluding chapter.

convictions of right. A deputy is an organ, through whom the will of his constituents is declared—the herald that proclaims their voice; a representative deliberates and acts *for* his constituents, and upon his own personal responsibility must endeavour to promote the true interests of the people, whatever may be their temporary whims or caprices. Burke was a noble representative, but not a deputy, when he declared to the electors of Bristol, "I did not obey your instructions; no! I conformed to the instructions of truth and nature, and maintained your interest, against your opinions, with a constancy that became me;" and Chatham understood the true nature of his office, though he may have erred on a point of etiquette, when he declined presenting a petition from his constituents of Bath. Representative government is a different kind of government from a pure democracy. It is essentially a limitation upon the people; they choose representatives because it is not safe that they themselves should discharge the functions of legislators or rulers. In human governments the power of representatives may, for the most part, be ultimately traced to the people, as this whole system of polity is generally, though not always, the offspring of popular will. In establishing this species of government, the people create the office of representative, define its powers, specify its duties and settle its rights. They form a Constitution, the very object of which is to prevent the accumulation of too much power in their own hands, to restrain the supremacy of their own will, and to check the tendencies of absolute authority to abuse and tyranny. This Constitution, once fixed, is the immediate source of all power to all the representatives chosen under it: to it, and to it alone, must they appeal for a knowledge of their rights, privileges and duties. *It*, and not the will of those who elect them, becomes their law. Their relations to the Constitution, which equally binds them and their constituents, render it absurd that they should be treated as mere organs, machines or automatons through which others act. It deserves further to be remarked that, in all organized States in

which the representative principle is a part of the Constitution, the representatives possess powers and discharge functions to which their constituents as a mass can lay no claim; putting it in this way beyond all doubt that a representative and deputy are fundamentally distinct. In the Church the representative government is not, as in the State, even ultimately the creature of the people: it is the direct appointment of Christ, and the powers and duties of ecclesiastical representatives are prescribed and defined in the Word of God, the real Constitution of the Church. They are represented as rulers, and not as tools; they are to study and administer the laws of the Saviour, and not bend to the caprices of the people; and they are to listen to no authoritative instructions but those which have proceeded from the throne of God. Christ never gave to the people, as a mass, any right to exercise jurisdiction or to administer discipline. They cannot appear in Session or Presbytery. It is not only inconvenient that they should be there in their collective capacity, but they have no right to be there. The privilege of attending as members, as component elements of the court, would be destructive of all the ends which representation is designed to secure: it would subvert the whole system of government. The business of the people is to elect the men who give sufficient evidence that they are fitted by the Spirit to fill the offices which Christ has appointed. "This is the power and right given unto the Church essentially considered with respect unto their officers, namely, to design, call, choose and set apart the persons by the ways of Christ's appointment unto those offices whereunto by His laws He hath annexed church power and authority."[1] These men represent the people because they are the choice of the people. The term *representative*, therefore, is equivalent to *chosen ruler:* it designates the manner in which the office is acquired, and not the source of its powers. When Elders, consequently, are styled in our Standards the *representatives*

[1] Owen on the Nature of a Gospel Church, chap. iii. Works, vol. xx., p. 389.

of the people, it is a total misapprehension to suppose that the meaning intended to be conveyed is that they are the deputies or delegates of the people, occupying a position and exercising powers which the people themselves might occupy and exercise. The title imports nothing more than that they are the persons whom the people have selected, as duly qualified and called of God, to perform the functions which Christ has enjoined upon the rulers of His house. The people *as such* possess not a single element of the *potestas jurisdictionis* which pertains to the Elders and the courts of the Church.

It is obvious, from this explanation of the term, that Pastors are as truly representatives of the people as Ruling Elders. They have, in this respect, a common ministry; and the reason why the title is not given to them as well as to the Elders is that they are called to discharge other duties, unconnected with the department of government, so that this title cannot be a complete description of their office. Pastors are more prominently preachers than rulers; and hence the names by which they are distinguished have a more pointed reference to the ministry of the Word than the power of jurisdiction. But in relation to the Ruling Elder, the term *representative of the people* is a complete description of his office. He is a chosen ruler, and nothing more. While the Pastor, in so far as he is a ruler, is as much a representative of the people as the other, yet he combines other functions with his representative character, which would render this term a very inadequate description of all his relations to the Church of God. His right to rule depends precisely upon the same grounds with the right of the Ruling Elder. Hence, the argument is nothing worth which denies that an Elder may impose hands in the ordination of Ministers, because he is the representative of the people, entrusted with no other powers but those which they themselves might exercise, among which the authority in question cannot confessedly be ranked. He is not a *locum tenens* of the brotherhood, but fills an office which Christ has ap-

pointed, the duties of which Christ has defined, the powers of which were never the property of the people, and cannot be claimed by them without gross usurpation. He can do many things which his constituents are not authorized to do; among which, for aught that appears, the imposition of hands may be properly reckoned. We might pause here, and the argument would be complete against those who maintain the doctrine of the Assembly on the preposterous ground that a representative and deputy are essentially the same. But the Scriptures and our Standards go much further, and both expressly teach that the Ruling Elder is strictly and properly a Presbyter, and therefore entitled to participate in all acts in which any Presbyter, *as such*, can bear a part. If the imposition of hands is a Presbyterial act, and the Scriptures and our Standards both style it *the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery*, Ruling Elders may join in it as lawfully as any other members of the court. The only way of evading the force of this argument is either to deny that the imposition of hands is a Presbyterial act, or that the Ruling Elder is properly a Presbyter. What we have said before on the general subject of ordination, coupled with the express words of Paul and our Form of Government, may be sufficient to show that there is no foundation for the hypothesis that ordination pertains to several and not to joint power, and belongs to the ministry of the Word and not to a court. The stress of the argument has turned chiefly on the other horn of the dilemma, and elaborate efforts have been made to prove, what seems at first to be little less than a contradiction, that the Elder is not properly a Presbyter, this term being restricted to Preachers, to Preachers *as such*, and to Preachers exclusively.

It cannot fail to be observed that the obvious effect of this theory is to invalidate the arguments for the Divine appointment of the office drawn from the natural meaning of the title, the acknowledged constitution of the Jewish Synagogue, and the plurality of Elders confessedly ordained in the apostolic churches. When these points are aban-

doned, we know of nothing stronger or clearer that shall be left from which a scriptural warrant for our system can be deduced. To us they seem to have been consistent who, when they had proved that the Ruling Elder was not a Presbyter, were prepared to abolish the office as a human contrivance and an unnecessary appendage to the Church.

It is idle to tell us that Paul speaks of *governments*, and using the abstract for the concrete means governors themselves, since it can be readily retorted that all Preachers are governors, being invested with authority to rule as well as to instruct. The term, in itself considered, does not necessarily convey the idea of a class of men whose sole business it is to administer the government of the Church. Paul may be speaking of an important function of the ministry of the Word, or enumerating the gifts with which the officers whom he had previously mentioned were furnished by Christ. Occasional allusions, like that which occurs in Romans, to "him that ruleth," can be interpreted apart from the supposition that there were those whose whole office in the Church was conversant with jurisdiction and discipline. These passages, independently and alone, cannot prove the office of Ruling Elder as it exists among us. They naturally fall in with the supposition of such an office, and become cumulative proofs of it when there is positive evidence apart from them to establish its existence. But it must be ascertained to us upon other grounds that there were such rulers in the Primitive Church before we can confidently interpret such passages as allusions to them. It seems to us, therefore, that to deny that a Ruling Elder is a Presbyter is virtually to deny the *jus divinum* of the eldership.

That *presbyter* as a title of office means a ruler, and nothing more than a ruler, we shall endeavour to show is at once the doctrine of our Standards and of the Word of God.

In treating of the person who fills the office of a Pastor, our Form of Government[1] assigns the reason why he is

[1] Book i., chap. iv.

termed *Presbyter* or *Elder*. The reason, of course, must include a definition of the title, as all the names by which the Pastor is distinguished, whether *Bishop, Minister, Angel* or *Ambassador*, "are expressive of his various duties." Now, on what ground is he styled a *Presbyter?* If this word were synonymous with *Preacher*, it would evidently be "because he is sent to declare the will of God to sinners, and to beseech them to be reconciled to God through Christ, or because he dispenses the manifold grace of God and the ordinances instituted by Christ." Yet our Constitution expressly declares that upon these grounds he is termed an *ambassador* and a *steward of the mysteries of God*. Why, then, is he denominated a *Presbyter*, and what is included in the application of this name? "As it is his duty," the Constitution answers, "to be grave and prudent, and an example of the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed *Presbyter* or *Elder*." Preachers, accordingly, are Elders, not because they preach or administer the sacraments, but because they are *governors*. He whose duty it is to be a grave, prudent, exemplary ruler in the house of God is a *Presbyter*. This is the definiton of our Standards; and as every element of it is unquestionably found in the Ruling Elder, the name can, with equal propriety, be applied to him. The Preacher shares in common with the Deacon the title of *Minister*, because both are appointed to a service, and he shares in common with the Ruling Elder the title of *Presbyter*, since both are appointed to rule. That our Standards regard the term as equally applicable to both is manifest from the fact that they quote the same passage of Scripture as a warrant for the presbyterial authority of both. They tell us that the Scriptures recognize a Pastor as a Presbyter, and refer among other texts to 1 Tim. v. 17. They tell us further[1] that "the office of Ruling Elder has been understood, by a great part of the Protestant Reformed Churches, to be designated in the Holy Scriptures by the

[1] Book i., chap. v.

title of *governments*, and of those *who rule well*, but do not labour in the Word and doctrine," and refer to this very same passage of Timothy in which those persons who rule well without labouring in the Word and doctrine are expressly denominated *Presbyters*. The inference is unavoidable that they regarded *Presbyter* as synonymous, not with *Preacher*, but *ruler*, and as properly descriptive of all who are called to administer government in the house of God.

That the definition of our Standards is in full accordance with the Word of God we shall, without going into an extended investigation from which we are precluded by the length which our article has already reached, attempt to show from such general considerations as are obviously suggested by the current phraseology of the sacred writers.

In the first place, we would call attention to the maxim of the great father of modern philosophy, the neglect of which has been the fruitful parent of most of the misapprehensions and mistakes which have perplexed and confused the minds of those who have defended the doctrine of the Assembly. "It is the peculiar and perpetual error of the human understanding," says Lord Bacon, "to be more moved and excited by affirmatives than negatives, whereas it ought duly and regularly to be impartial—nay, in establishing any true axiom, THE NEGATIVE INSTANCE IS THE MOST POWERFUL." It is a false induction, therefore, to collect together a bundle of passages in which Presbyters are mentioned who were unquestionably Preachers, and then, without pausing to inquire whether there may not be negative instances, or whether the real ground has been discovered of the application of the term, to lay it down as an indisputable axiom that the scriptural Presbyter is a Minister of the Word. As the negative instance is most powerful, *one* such instance is sufficient to overthrow, to establish the logical contradictory of, the universal conclusion deduced from a host of affirmatives. To produce a thousand texts in which the words *Presbyter* and *Preacher* appeared to be interchangeable would signify nothing, if a

single case could be alleged in which they were evidently of different import. In such a contingency the dictate of sound philosophy and of sober criticism would be to inquire, whether there were not some property common to both terms, in consequence of which the affirmative and negative instances might be fairly harmonized. If the term *Presbyter* in a multitude of Scriptures is applied to Preachers, and in a single instance applied to those who are not Preachers, instead of the term being made equivocal, a definition should be sought embracing the points in which those who were and those who were not Preachers agreed. This definition would include all that is essential to the meaning of the title, and should set forth the precise ground on which it is attributed to either class. If any other persons besides Preachers are denominated *Presbyters* in the Scriptures, it follows irresistibly that Preachers are not so called because they are Preachers, but in consequence of some other property of their office common to them and to others who have no right to dispense the mysteries of God. This common property, whatever it may be, is the essence of the Presbyterate; and that it consists in the right to rule is clear from one passage which proves, beyond the possibility of doubt, that *Presbyters* and *Ministers of the Word* are not synonymous terms. That passage is 1 Tim. v. 17: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the Word and doctrine." These words, furnishing the powerful negative instance of Lord Bacon, contain the logical contradictory of the proposition that *Presbyter* is the title of ordinary Ministers of the Word. To affirm, in the face of this Scripture, that all Elders are Teachers is no less preposterous than to affirm, in the face of experience and of fact, that all that are mortal are men.

But we are told[1] that "as the Greek word for *Deacon* is used in a general sense for all church-officers, and yet is the

[1] Reference is here had, as in other parts of this article, to a pamphlet on the Elder Question, under the signature of Geneva. See p. 9.

specific title of one particular class of officers, so the word *Presbyter* may be taken in a wide sense, including even Apostles, and yet is the definite title of ordinary Ministers of the Word, and is never applied in its specific sense and without qualification to any who are not Ministers." That is, if we understand the argument, *Presbyter*, from being a generic term, susceptible originally of a larger extension, became eventually the definite title of a particular class. It is an universal law of classification that what logicians call the whole comprehension of the genus, or every idea which enters into a just definition of the name of a class, must be found in *all* the species which are included under it. This is the only ground on which the genus can be predicated of the subordinate classes. Hence, if the word *Presbyter* is generic, and in its full comprehension capable of being affirmed of other classes of men besides Ministers of the Gospel, the idea of preaching cannot enter as an element into the definition of the genus. The specific differences which distinguish the various classes embraced under a common name cannot be included in the definition of that name. If Preachers, accordingly, constitute a species of the genus *Presbyter*, and some who are not Preachers constitute another, it is intuitively obvious that the comprehension of the generic term excludes the property of preaching. The *specific* difference of the classes consists in the possession in the one case, and the absence in the other, of lawful authority to preach. Hence, the original ground of applying the general term to Preachers must have been some property, from the very nature of classification, which they possessed in common with others who were not called to dispense the Word and sacraments. To say that the term *Presbyter* became eventually restricted to a single class, though in its general sense capable of a larger application, is not an answer to the difficulty. It could only become definite by being limited in common usage to a species which at first was included under it, not in consequence of its specific difference, but in consequence of possessing the

whole comprehension of the genus, whatever it might be. A generic term must first be applied only in its generic sense before it can be made the definite title of any of its species. The illustration suggested in the case of the word *Deacon*, though fatal to the purpose of this writer, is precisely in point for us. The generic idea expressed by the word is that of *servant*. In this wide sense it embraces a great variety of classes distinguished from each other by the different nature of their services, but agreeing in the common property of service. The whole generic idea is found in each species, whether composed of private individuals, inspired Apostles, Ministers of the Word, dispensers of alms or rulers of the Church: all, without exception, are Deacons, because all, without exception, are *servants*. This word, however, is restricted for the most part as a title of office to a particular class, in which, however, the whole generic idea is found and very conspicuously presented. The generic meaning remains unchanged, and the definite title simply applies it to a particular kind of service. If, now, the case of *Presbyter* is analogous, the generic idea expressed by the word can have no reference to preaching. This can be no part of the wide sense in which it is predicated of other men as well as ordinary Ministers of the Word; and if a general term by becoming specific only limits the application of its generic sense, as in the instance of *Deacon*, *Presbyter* can never, under any circumstances, be applied to ministers simply *as such*. In ordinary cases the name of the genus is not likely to be restricted to any of its species, unless the species exhibits very clearly, strikingly and prominently the peculiar elements which constitute the genus. The generic is sometimes more conspicuous than the specific difference, and in such cases the limitation is easy and natural. Upon this principle it is more probable that the term *Presbyter*, if restricted, should be restricted to those who are exclusively rulers than to those who combine other duties with the function of government. Hence, we find that in the fourth century, when Prelacy had made such

encroachments in the Church, almost every title of office, the name *Deacon* not excepted, had become confined to the clergy. The few scattered remnants of the primitive rulers who lingered as monuments of bygone days were distinguished by names corresponding exactly to that of Presbyter, and borrowed from the Latin translation of the Scriptures in common use. It is true that the accommodated word itself was applied only to preachers, because everywhere, except in Northern Africa, there was nothing else to correspond to it. But wherever the office has existed, or after long years of discontinuance has been revived, it uniformly receives a title which answers to the original term in the Greek.

Another general consideration which proves that the scriptural Presbyter is simply a Ruler, and that the term as appropriately belongs to Elders as Ministers, is the fact that all the words which are used interchangeably with it are expressive of government rather than of teaching. There can be no doubt that *Pastor*, *Bishop* and *Presbyter* are different names of precisely the same office. To fix the meaning, therefore, of the words *Pastor* and *Bishop* is to settle the import of the Scripture *Presbyter*.

Pastor or *Shepherd*, in its metaphorical acceptation, expresses the general idea of guidance and authority, and may refer either to the instructions of a Teacher or the directions and government of a Ruler. Perhaps, in the Old Testament, it is more commonly descriptive of government than of the office of teaching; and we are inclined to think that the true ground of its application to a Teacher is the tendency of his instructions to regulate the conduct of life. Be this as it may, a Pastor is unquestionably a Ruler. Every scholar will call to mind the *ποιμένα λαῶν* of Homer, which the Scholiast explains to be equivalent to *βασιλέα ογλῶν*. Instances of similar usage abound in the classical authors, but the Septuagint is better authority for us. In Ezekiel xxxvii. 24, *Shepherd* and *King* are evidently employed as synonymous: "And David my servant shall be King over them,

and they all shall have one shepherd." "*Pastor*," says Schleusner, "hoc est *rex*, unus erit omnium." God promises His people, in Ezekiel xxxiv. 23, 24, that He "will set up one *shepherd* over them," even His servant David, who is immediately described as a "Prince among them." To feed the people of Israel is explained, in 1 Chronicles xi. 2, by being their ruler: "Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be ruler over my people Israel." When we come to the New Testament, the idea of rule seems to be intimately associated with the word *Shepherd* or *Pastor* and its derivatives.

The clause which our Translators have rendered, Revelation ii. 27, "He shall *rule* them with a rod of iron," is, in the original, He shall *feed* them with a rod of iron. In Matthew ii. 6—"Out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel"—the Greek is, That shall *feed*, or be the Shepherd of, my people Israel; and in Paul's enumeration of the officers whom the ascending Saviour bequeathed to the Church, if *Pastor* and *Ruler* are not synonymous, as Ambrose[1] evidently thought them to be, there is no mention of rulers at all.

These passages are sufficient to prove that Pastors are not necessarily Teachers, and that Elders may be Pastors in both the classical and scriptural sense, without being ordinary Ministers of the Word. The generic idea is that of guidance or direction; the specific form of this guidance may be instruction or government.

In reference to the other synonym of Presbyter, *Bishop*—ἐπίσκοπος—the case is still clearer. This term, wherever found, whether in the classical writers of antiquity, the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, the works of Josephus or the books of the Apocrypha, seems to convey the general idea of guardianship, superintendence and care. As a title of office it is properly applicable to a subordinate class of rulers, who, possessing no independent powers of their own, are appointed to see that duties enjoined upon

[1] Comment. on Ephes. iv.

others are faithfully discharged. They differ from the higher order of magistrates in having no original authority, and in being confined to the supervision of others in the department committed to their care. They have no power to prescribe the law; they can only see that its precept is observed. Their functions seem to be exactly expressed by the English word *Overseer*. The subordinate magistrates sent out by Athens to take care of her interests in tributary cities were styled Bishops.[1] Homer, to inculcate the doctrine that the gods will protect the sanctity of treaties, does not scruple to call them the *Bishops* of covenants.[2] Hector, as the guardian and defender of Troy, is lamented by Andromache under the same title.[3]

According to the usage of the Septuagint, the word is much more intimately associated with ideas of rule than those of instruction. In Numbers xxxi. 14, where our English version has *Officers of the host*, the Greek translation is *Bishops* or Overseers *of the host—ἐπισκόποις τῆς δυνάμεως*. An officer in an army certainly occupies a position of authority; he has a right to command, and can exact obedience under the severest penalties. Such subordinate officers as those contemplated in this passage were specially appointed to enforce obedience to the orders of their superiors. In Judges ix. 28, Zebul, in the Greek version, is expressly styled a *Bishop;* and as in the thirtieth verse of the same chapter he is denominated a *Ruler* of the city, the terms would seem to be synonymous. The word occurs in Nehemiah xi. 9, 14, 22, and in each text evidently means a ruler of the specified division—one entrusted with authority—and not a teacher. The English version has properly translated the word as it occurs in the original, *Overseer*, which is also the precise rendering of the Greek. The overseers appointed over all the people, in 1 Maccabees i. 57, were evidently

[1] Scholiast. in Aristoph. Av., 1023. Boeckh's Public Economy of Athens, vol. i.

[2] Iliad, 22, 225: *Μάρτυροι ἔσσονται καὶ ἐπίσκοποι ἁρμονιάων.*

[3] Iliad., 24, 729: *ἦ γὰρ ὅλωλας ἐπίσκοπος.*

magistrates who had it in charge to see that the commands of Antiochus were observed. Josephus[1] employs the word in a sense completely analogous, and the first meaning which Hesychius assigns to it is that of *king*.

The introduction of the term as a title of office in the Christian Church is happily explained by Neander.[2]

From the account which has been given of the meaning of this term, it follows, in the first place, that it is not applicable to Preachers, *as Ministers of the Word;* and, in the second, that there is great beauty in its application to the rulers of the Church. A Preacher, as such, is charged with declaring the whole counsel of God; and if, in relation to this matter, he has the oversight of any one, it must be of himself. The rulers of the Church have the oversight of him, but he has, *as a minister*, the oversight of none. To church-rulers the term is peculiarly appropriate. The officers of Christ's kingdom are only subordinate functionaries, whose whole business it is to see that the laws of Christ are duly administered and observed. They have no power to legislate themselves, nor to invent new and additional sanc-

[1] Ant., b. x., chap. iv., § 1.

[2] "The name of *Presbyters*, by which this office was at first designated, was, as we have before remarked, transferred to the Christian Church from the Jewish Synagogue. But now, when the churches had spread themselves more among the heathen of Grecian origin, there was associated with this appellation, thus borrowed from the civil and religious constitution of the Jews, another name, more connected with the mode of designating social relations among the Greeks, and better adapted to denote the official duties connected with the dignity of Presbyters. This was the appellation ἐπίσκοποι, *overseers*—over the whole Church and over all its affairs; just as in the Attic civil administration, those who were sent out to organize the States dependent on Athens were called ἐπίσκοποι; and just as this name seems to have become generally current in the language of civil life to denote any kind of governing superintendence in the public administration. Since, now, the name ἐπίσκοπος was nothing more than an accommodation of the original Jewish and Hellenistic name of office to the social relations existing among the heathen, it follows, even from this, that originally both names referred to one and the same office, just as also both appellations are often used interchangeably as being entirely synonymous." —*Biblical Repository*, vol. iv., p. 254. See also Ch. Hist., vol. i., p. 184.

tions: they are nothing but ministerial agents to carry out the instructions of their Lord and Master.

The considerations which have been presented we deem sufficient to show, that our Standards and the Scriptures concur in teaching that the Ruling Elder is truly and properly a Presbyter; and therefore has a right to participate in all acts in which any other Presbyter can bear a part. It does not follow, however, that because he is a scriptural Pastor and Bishop he is therefore a Minister of the Word and a steward of the mysteries of God. Preaching is a very different department of labour from ruling; and though all Preachers, whether Apostles, Evangelists or Pastors, in the technical sense of our Standards, are rulers according to the appointment of God, yet the converse of the proposition is by no means true—that all rulers, whether Elders, Bishops, *aut alio quocunque nomine vocentur*, are Preachers. We affirm, without hesitation, that all Ministers of the Word, lawfully called and ordained, are Presbyters, but we are very far from affirming that all Presbyters, lawfully called and ordained, are Ministers of the Word. We maintain that Christ has appointed two classes of rulers or chosen representatives of the people—one to preach and rule, the other only to rule; that *Presbyter* and *Bishop* are terms expressive of *government* and not of *instruction*, and therefore appropriate to both classes. If, now, we have proved that an Elder is a Presbyter, and that ordination is a Presbyterial act, we can deduce no other conclusion from our premises but that Ruling Elders when members of the court have an equal right with their ministerial brethren to participate in all the stages of the process. In this conclusion we can detect the elements of neither Prelacy nor Independency; it seems to us to be nothing more nor less than plain, simple, consistent Presbyterianism. And here we shall make an end, commending the subject to the prayerful study of the Church, especially of those who are called to administer its government and discipline.

THE RULING ELDER A PRESBYTER.

[1]THERE is but one hypothesis upon which, consistently with the Scriptures, Ruling Elders can be excluded

[1] [Subjoined is a portion of a private letter from Dr. Thornwell to the Editor of the *Spirit of the Nineteenth Century*, which appears there in the form of a note to the article, and which, as the Editor well says, "contains matter worthy of itself to be seriously pondered, and which cannot fail to impart additional interest and importance to the article itself and to the subjects which it treats."—Eds.]

In conformity with my promise, I send you an article upon the right of Ruling Elders to impose hands in the ordination of Ministers. I have confined my argument exclusively to the constitution and usage of the apostolic and primitive Church. It was my intention, at first, to have noticed some of the general principles upon which the right has been denied, but I soon found that the limits of a single article were too narrow to allow so extensive a discussion; and, upon the whole, I thought more good would be done by drawing attention to that branch of the subject discussed in my piece. I know not how to account for it that there is so much ignorance among our Ministers and Churches in regard to the distinctive features of our system. Our name is derived from our Form of Government, and the characteristic element of that form is the importance which we attach to *Ruling Elders* in contradistinction from *Preachers*. To say, therefore, that a Ruling Elder is not entitled to the appellation of *Presbyter*, either in conformity with Scripture usage or primitive antiquity, is just to say that the fundamental principle of our polity is a human institution. The essay which I send you, though short and simple, has really been the fruit of much patient study and laborious investigation. I gave particularly the Apostolic Fathers a careful perusal in order to see what their testimony actually was, and I formed my own opinions without looking into the books which profess to collect their testimony. I afterward compared the results at which I had arrived with the labours of King and Bingham, and I saw nothing in them which induced me to change my opinion. I am still persuaded that *Presbyter* means simply a ruler, and that the office of Preacher is a function superadded to the Presbyterate; that the preacher in the primitive Church was selected from the Consistory, and in the age of Ignatius was distinguished from

from the right of imposing hands in the ordination of Ministers, and that is that they are not Presbyters—that they do not belong to that class of officers who, when assembled in council, possess, according to Paul (1 Tim. iv. 14), the right in question. If they are recognized in the Word of God as Presbyters, they are certainly entitled to be members of the Presbytery, and as certainly endowed with all the presbyterial authority which attaches to any of their brethren. The whole controversy, then, must turn upon the question whether or not they are scriptural Presbyters. What, then, is a Presbyter?

I have no hesitation in asserting that the fundamental idea conveyed by the term as a title of office is that of legitimate authority to rule or govern. The princes of tribes and the heads of families in the Jewish State were denominated *elders* because they were invested with subordinate jurisdiction in the conduct of the Commonwealth. How such an application of the term originated it is not perhaps important to determine; but whatever reason we may choose to assign, —whether it be that, in the origin of States, superior age as implying superior wisdom and experience was the first prerequisite to official elevation, or whether it be that the reverence and esteem, the veneration and respect, which should

the Presbyters by the title of *Bishop;* and that it was owing to accidental circumstances that the Presbyters ever came to be Preachers. I can trace in Ignatius the Constitution of our own Church. His extravagant language is certainly to be condemned, but I am inclined to think we err on the opposite extreme, and attach too little importance to the courts of God's house. I have long been convinced that our present method of conducting the affairs of the Church through institutions which can hardly be regarded as anything more than secular corporations is absolutely fatal to our beautiful system. Boards have usurped the place of Presbyteries, and the strength of the Church is sought in them rather than in the healthful action of the organization which God has appointed. We have, in fact, two systems of polity—one in our Constitution which is a dead letter, and another in vigorous operation which, like Pharaoh's lean kine, eats up its rival. I was delighted to find that you were not ashamed to maintain the *Divine right of Presbyterianism.* Our Ministers and Elders must be brought to this point before they will feel the obligation of trying their own system.

always be accorded to the hoary head, were intended by a delicate allusion to be transferred to rulers,—certain it is that among all nations whose institutions are known to us, terms which in their private and personal applications are descriptive only of superior age are found as titles of authority and place. In their appropriation to stations of distinction in the State, they lose all reference to private and personal characteristics. In their public applications they cease to designate a *man*, and are used exclusively to designate an *office*. The Jewish Elder and the Roman Senator retained these titles of rank and authority, however few their years or limited their wisdom. In the Jewish Synagogue, from which the word was confessedly introduced into the Christian Church, *Presbyter* and *Ruler* were synonymous terms. It would seem, indeed, that, as these assemblies of the people were especially convoked to listen to the Law and to engage in acts of public adoration, to communicate oral instruction was no necessary part of the service. Hence, there was no office in the synagogues corresponding to the Preacher of the Christian churches. Any one who received permission from the Elders was at perfect liberty to address the people—an arrangement which could not have been admitted if there had been any public functionary whose duty required him to teach the congregation. To the Zakinim or Elders pertained the offices of government and discipline. They could bind and loose and preside in the assemblies, but never seem to have looked on the imparting of oral instruction as any part of their appropriate functions. The Angel of the synagogue, if he were anything more than a menial servant, probably received his appellation from the fact that he acted as a messenger of the people to God in being the organ to express their prayers.

It is manifest, then, that *Presbyter* and *Preacher* were not originally interchangeable terms. There were Presbyters in the Synagogue, but no Preachers. That the Apostles, in transferring the word to the Christian Church, enlarged its common and received acceptation so as to include the addi-

tional idea of authority to teach, making *a Christian Presbyter* and *Christian Preacher* equivalent expressions, is a proposition equally unsustained by scriptural usage or ecclesiastical antiquity. That Presbyters, as such, were not entitled to preach, nor Preachers, as such, entitled to rule, would seem to be an obvious conclusion from the marked difference which the Apostle repeatedly makes between the gift of teaching and the gift of government. Rulers and Teachers are different endowments with which the ascending Saviour furnished the Church, and no ingenuity of criticism can fasten the same signification upon such terms as *doctrine* and *government*. The miraculous gifts, too, which, according to Paul, 1 Cor. xiii. 8, were speedily to cease—the gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge—all had evident reference to the function of teaching. The extraordinary officers who possessed these endowments were certainly Teachers; and yet, from the fact that they did not continue to adorn the Church beyond the age of the Apostles, it may be safely inferred that they were not Presbyters. Among the first permanent officers of the Church, Ambrose enumerates "*rectores*" or Rulers.[1] While, however, it was the specific duty of a Presbyter to rule, he who was a Presbyter might also be a Teacher. There was nothing in the nature of the presbyterial office to prevent the individual who filled it from adding to its duties the function of public instruction; and we have the testimony of Paul himself that, in the constitution of the Primitive Church, some of the Elders did in fact preach, while others confined themselves to the appropriate duties of the eldership—that is, to government and discipline. "Let the Elders," says the Apostle, "that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the Word and doctrine." 1 Tim. v. 17.[2]

[1] Comm. on Ephes. iv.

[2] The interpretation given in the text is certainly the obvious interpretation of this celebrated passage. For a full, complete and satisfactory defence of this ancient and general exposition, meeting all the arguments of Scultetus, Erastus, Bilson, Saravia, Mead, Grotius, Hammond and Mosheim, see Owen on the True Nature of a Gospel Church, chap. vii.;

To rule well was the duty of all Elders, regarded simply as Elders; to labour in word and doctrine was to do something more than the Presbyterate required, and therefore such persons were entitled not only to the respect which was due to Elders, but also to that which was due to Preachers. From this passage, it would also appear to have been the custom in the apostolic Church to select the Preachers from the class of Elders. Instead of making an additional order in the Church, the Apostles, it would seem, in the permanent arrangement of its constitution, required those who were to labour in word and in doctrine to be also strictly and properly Presbyters.[1] Hence the common distinction between Teaching and Ruling Elders. The distinction, however, is not strictly accurate. The eldership, as such, never includes teaching: this is always a superadded function, and it is not in consequence of his Presbyterial authority that an Elder preaches. For obvious reasons, the Elder who preached would always be the Moderator or president of the council of his brethren, just as in the constitution of Presbyterian churches at the present day the Minister always moderates the Session. Though they were all equal in office and equal in jurisdiction, and all equally constituted the Bishops of the Church, yet in the age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles the term *Bishop* became generally restricted to the Presbyter who preached. An instance of a similar restriction of a generic term exists at the present day even among us. The word *Pastor* belongs as much to Elders as Preachers, and yet is generally confined exclusively to Preachers. Hence the limitation of the term *Bishop* should by no means astonish us. The reason of this restriction is to be sought in the fact that he always presided over the Presbytery. He dif-

Works, vol. xx. With Owen concur Calvin, Cameron, Macknight, Rosenmüller and the vast majority of Protestant writers.

[1] The following passage from Jerome may be regarded as proof of some such permanent arrangement: "Alexandriæ a Marco Evangelista usque ad Heraclam et Dionysium Episcopos, *Presbyteri semper unum ex se electum*, in excelsiori gradu collocatum, episcopum nominabant; quomodo si exercitus imperatorem faciat."—Ep. 85 ad Evang.

fered from his brethren in nothing but the authority to preach and to dispense the sacraments; the dispensation of the sacraments being, in fact, only a symbolical method of preaching, and, therefore, an exclusive function of the Preacher's office. It was in consequence of possessing this power, and this alone, that he was entitled, according to the Apostle, to double honour. He shared in a larger degree the affections of the people, and received from his associates in office the high distinction of a permanent presidency. It is clear, from all the documents of early antiquity, that preaching was the leading and characteristic distinction of him who received the special appellation of *Bishop*. He preached by an inherent right; it pertained to his office, and he was bound under solemn sanctions to dispense the Word and sacraments.[1] Those, on the other hand, who re-

[1] In Cyprian's Letters, such phrases as "Episcopo tractante," "episcopos tractantes," are continually recurring, showing that the ideas of a *Bishop* and *preaching* were continually associated in this Father's mind. There is just as conclusive testimony to this point in the Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp. In chap. vi. of that epistle (Russell, vol. ii., p. 75), Bishops are called *οἰκονόμοι, stewards*, in evident allusion to 1 Cor. iv. 5, "stewards of the mysteries of God"—that is, Preachers of the Gospel and dispensers of the sacraments. Elders are called *πάρεδροι, assessors*—that is, assistants in council, a plain allusion to their authority to rule; and Deacons are called *ὑπηρέται, servants*, in allusion to their service, dispensing the bounties of the Church. In the same Epistle he directs Polycarp *to speak* to every one as God should give him help, and characterises his flock as "*disciples*," evidently presenting Polycarp in the light of a teacher. (Russell, vol. ii., p. 64.) In his Epistle to the Trallians, chap. iii. (Russell, vol. ii., p. 172), he directs them to "reverence the Deacons as an institution of Christ, to reverence the Bishop as the son of the Father, and the Elders as the council of God." Here is still the same distinction—the *Son reveals* the Father, and the Bishop *reveals*—that is, *teaches*—the *truth*, while the Presbyters are his assessors in council. If the reader wishes to see the respective qualifications of Bishops and Elders in the time of Ignatius, and to be yet more fully satisfied that the one had primary reference to *teaching* and the other to *ruling*, let him compare the 1st and 2d sections of the Epistle to Polycarp (Russell, vol. ii., pp. 64, 65) with the Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, section vi. (Russell, vol. ii., p. 240.) It is plain also from the Apostolical Constitutions that the peculiar duties of a Bishop were precisely such as are imposed upon those who in the Presbyterian Church are now denominated Pastors. (Vid. Lib. ii., c. 27,

tained the original name of *Elders* had no such inherent right. "It is not lawful," says Ignatius, "either to baptize or celebrate the eucharist without the Bishop." Again: "Let no one perform any ecclesiastical office—such as preaching or the sacraments—without the Bishop." The same was determined in the councils of Laodicea, Arles and Toledo, and such also was the testimony of Tertullian, Jerome and Ambrose.[1]

We learn from Posidonius that until the time of Austin, in the African churches, Elders were not permitted to preach in the presence of the Bishops, and only by his authority and as his substitute when the Bishop was absent. They did not officiate by virtue of any power inherent in their order.[2]

28, etc., and Lib. viii., c. 4, 30, 31.) These testimonies might be indefinitely increased, but enough has been said to show the real distinction between a Bishop and an Elder. It was not a distinction of *order* or *ecclesiastical jurisdiction*. In all acts of government and discipline they were united, but one was a *steward* of the mysteries of God, a *dispenser* of the Word and sacraments, and the other was not. The Bishop and Elders of Ignatius are precisely the *Pastor* and *Session* of a Presbyterian congregation. So it was in the days of Cyprian, as might be shown at large.

[1] Ignat. Epist. ad Smyr. c. viii. (Russell, vol. ii., p. 50)—"Μηδεὶς χωρὶς τοῦ ἐπισκόπου τὶ πρασσέτω τῶν ἀνηκόντων εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. Οὐκ ἐξόν ἐστιν χωρὶς τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, οὔτε βαπτίζειν, οὔτε ἀγάπην ποιεῖν." There is proof in this context, it may be observed by the way, that the Bishop was simply the Pastor of the church. "Wherever the Bishop appears, there let the multitude (the congregation) be." "Οπου ἂν φανῇ ὁ ἐπίσκοπος, ἐκεῖ τὸ πλῆθος ἔστω.

The Council of Arles, according to one reading, says: "Ut Presbyteri sine conscientia episcoporum nihil faciant." (Can. 19.) The Council of Laodicea says (Can. 57, Labb. i., p. 1505) Τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους μηδὲν πράττειν ἄνευ τῆς γνώμης τοῦ ἐπισκόπου. The Council of Toledo says (Labb. ii., p. 1226), Sine conscientia autem episcopi nihil penitus faciendum; or as it is in the margin, Nihil presbyteri agere presumant. To these may be added xxxviii. Can. Apost. Labb. i., p. 33.

Dandi jus quidem, says Tertullian (De Baptismo, C. xvii.), summus sacerdos, qui est episcopus: dehinc Presbyteri et diaconi: non tamen sine auctoritate episcopi, propter ecclesiæ honorem.

Jerome (Dial. cont. Lucif.) testifies: Inde venit ut, sine jussione episcopi, neque Presbyter, neque diaconus jus habet baptizandi. See also Ambrose, De Sacrament., L. iii., c. i.

[2] Eidem presbytero potestatem dedit coram se in ecclesia evangelium prædicandi ac frequentissime tractandi: contra usum quidem ac consue-

From the same authority we gather that the custom of permitting them at all was introduced from the Eastern churches.[1] How is such language consistent with the supposition that they were *ex officio* Ministers of the Word? After the disturbance created by Arius, we are informed that the Presbyters of Alexandria were debarred from preaching by the authority of the Bishop.[2] Now, if they possessed the same Divine right with himself to dispense the Word, if they had regarded themselves in any other light than as exercising a delegated trust, and acting under the responsibility of the Bishop whose proper place it was to preach, how could they with a conscience void of offence have submitted to such an edict from one who was not officially their superior? The truth is, it is perfectly preposterous to make *Presbyter* and *Preacher* synonymous terms. To effect such a confusion of things separate and distinct was the work of time. The custom of permitting the Elders to preach originated, in the first instance, from a laudable desire on the part of the Bishops to have their people instructed during their absence. What at first, however, was granted as an indulgence, soon came to be demanded as a right, and the innovation did not stop with Elders. Even the Deacons, from a similar permission granted under similar circumstances, claimed eventually to be preachers of the Word and stewards of the mysteries of God. This was a more remarkable change than that which took place with reference to the Eldership. Here an office, notoriously instituted for the express purpose of protecting Preachers from secular affairs, undergoes a transformation so astonishing and wonderful as to assume the very duties which it was intended to relieve. The same ambition which would prompt the Elders to aspire to the double

tudinem Africanarum ecclesiarum; unde etiam ei nonnulli episcopi detrahebant. Postea bono precedente exemplo, accepta ab episcopis potestate, presbyteri nonnulli coram episcopis tractare cœperunt Verbum Dei.—Vit. Aug. c. v.

[1] Ibid.

[2] Socrates, Lib. 5. Soz. Lib. 7.

honour which was due to the Preacher's office would prompt the Bishops to indulge their humour, since as the Presbyters expanded into Preachers they themselves would expand into Prelates. Hence, from the common pride and vanity of both Bishops and Elders, preaching came eventually to be regarded as a necessary element of Presbyterial authority, though in the beginning it was unquestionably otherwise. Still, however, as late as the fourth century, when Prelacy had made extensive and formidable encroachments, and almost if not entirely obliterated the original application of the term *Presbyter*, we find some traces of the ancient constitution in the churches of Northern Africa. The *seniores plebis*, who are confessed to have been ecclesiastical officers, were the Ruling Elders of the primitive age. Some learned men have been inclined to deny this position, because in the writings of the times they are distinguished from Presbyters. But about this time *Presbyter* had generally become a title of the ministry, and hence, in distinguishing the *seniores plebis* from Presbyters, the meaning is that they were not Preachers, they were not the Presbyters of the day. This, however, is no sufficient proof that they were not precisely the Presbyters who, in the times of the Apostles, were content to rule without attempting to preach, no more than the studied distinction which the writings of the Fathers make between Elder and Bishop proves that they were not originally the same. In the rapid tendencies to Prelacy which the Church was everywhere exhibiting, it is impossible to account for the introduction of a class of officers so repugnant to the genius and spirit of the hierarchy as these seniors of the people at any period subsequent to that of the Apostles; and hence I am compelled to regard them as venerable monuments of a race that was rapidly dying away. As Bishops had now discarded the ancient title of *Presbyter* and assumed the prerogatives of Prelacy, and as Presbyters had aspired to the more honourable functions of labouring in word and doctrine, these humble rulers were content to manifest their modesty and

wisdom by the unassuming and scriptural name of *Elders of the people* (πρεσβύτεροι τοῦ λάου).

From the preceding statements it appears that, in the Primitive and Apostolic Church, Presbyters, as such, were simply and exclusively rulers. One of the Presbytery in each congregation was usually invested with authority to preach and dispense the sacraments, and became by consequence the permanent president of the body. This preaching Elder received in process of time as his distinctive appellation the title of *Bishop*, while the others continued to be called by the general name of office *Presbyters* or *Elders*. The sole distinction in the first instance between the Bishop and the Elders lay simply in the power of preaching. It was his privilege and duty by virtue of his office, but it did not pertain to the essential nature of the Presbyterate. Gradually, however, from indulgence on the part of the Ministers and ambition on the part of the rulers, they began to labour as Preachers of the Gospel, so that in process of time *Presbyter* lost its original meaning of ruler, *Bishop* lost its primitive meaning of Preacher, and those who ought to have been rulers became Ministers, and those who ought to have been Ministers became Prelates; and Diocesan Episcopacy, with all its abominations, was established upon the ruins of parochial Presbytery. This view of the primitive constitution of the Church reconciles the testimony of the ancient Fathers, which upon any other hypothesis is full of contradiction and absurdity, and certainly accords with the obvious interpretation of the accounts which are furnished in the Acts and Epistles touching the organization and arrangement of the churches founded by the Apostles. As, then, Ruling Elders are strictly and properly the Presbyters of Scripture, they are, according to the Apostle, entitled to lay on hands in the ordination of Ministers. The argument is as simple as it is irresistible. The imposition of hands is the prerogative of Presbytery; Presbytery is composed exclusively of Presbyters; Presbyters are strictly the rulers of the Church; therefore, Pres-

bytery consists of rulers, and therefore rulers are entitled to ordain. Every proposition in this chain is sustained by express words of Scripture. There is no possibility of excluding Ruling Elders from the right to impose their hands, without showing in the first instance that they are not Presbyters, or, what is the same, that a Presbyter must necessarily be a Preacher. When this last proposition is established, Ruling Elders may not only give up the right to ordain, but every other right which pertains to their office. They become a mere human appendage to the Church, officers of man's institution, whom it is presumption to admit into ecclesiastical courts. Presbyterianism stands or falls with the distinction between Ruling and Teaching Elders. There is, in addition to this scriptural argument, satisfactory proof that for three hundred years after the time of the Apostles the right of the Presbyters to ordain Presbyters was universally acknowledged. The third canon of the fourth Council of Carthage provides that in the ordination of Elders, while the Bishop of the church offered up the ordaining prayer, the whole Consistory or Presbytery should join with him in imposing hands upon the head of the candidate.[1] The Council of Ancyra, which was still earlier, recognizes the rights of city Presbyters to administer ordination even in different parishes from their own with the consent of the Bishop.[2] That they could also participate in the ordination of Bishops, to say nothing of the testimony of Scripture in the case of Timothy, is decisively proved by the fact that Pelagius, Bishop of Rome, was ordained by one Presbyter in conjunction with two Bishops; and as the canons at the time required the presence of at least three Bishops, and as the ordination

[1] Presbyter cum ordinatur, episcopo eum benedicente, et manum super caput ejus tenente, etiam omnes presbyteri qui presentes sunt manus suas juxta manum episcopi super caput illius teneant.—Labb. ii., p. 1199.

[2] *Χωρεπισκόπους μὴ ἐξεῖναι πρεσβυτέρους ἢ διακόνους χειροτονεῖν, ἀλλὰ μηδὲ πρεσβυτέρους πόλεως, χωρὶς, τῷ ἐπιτραπῆναι ὑπὸ τῷ ἐπισκόπου μετὰ γραμμάτων, ἐν ἑτέρᾳ παροικίᾳ.*—Labb. i., p. 1461.

of Pelagius was admitted to be valid, a Presbyter must have been equal to a Bishop, and the imposition of his hands just as available as that of a Bishop.[1] To these cases may be added the testimony of Firmilian in the age of Cyprian. That Presbyters, however, did not ordain by indulgence, as they preached and baptized, is clear from the oft-repeated testimony of Paul, which vests an absolute right of ordination in the Presbytery. "All power and grace," says Firmilian,[2] "is constituted in the church where Elders preside and have the power of baptizing, confirming and ordaining." Jerome distinctly asserts that, from the days of Mark the Evangelist until the time of Heraclas and Dionysius, the Presbyters at Alexandria made their own Bishop. He was elected, in the first place, from among themselves, and then ordained by the parochial Presbytery, as Timothy was ordained by the Presbytery of Derbe or Lystra. This seems to be the obvious meaning of the words, and is a plain proof of the existence in primitive times of that arrangement to which we have already referred by which the Minister of the church—he who was to labour in word and doctrine—was required to be a Presbyter.

The argument from Scripture and antiquity might here be regarded as complete, and the right of Ruling Elders to impose hands in ordination unanswerably established, if it were not that a mass of testimony exists, apparently inconsistent with this hypothesis, which the interests of truth require to be explained. Bishops, it must be confessed, began at a very early period to be ordained by Bishops alone. According to the first Council of Arles and the third of Carthage, the presence of at least three Bishops was necessary to give validity to the ordination of a Bishop.

[1] Lib. Pontif. Vit. Pelag. Dum non essent episcopi, qui eum ordinarent, inventi sunt duo episcopi, Joannes de Perusio et Bonus de Ferentino, et Andreas, Presbyter de Sotia, et ordinaverunt eum.

[2] Apud Cypr. Epist. 75—Omnis potestas et gratia in ecclesia constituta sit ubi præsident majores natu, qui et baptizandi et manum imponendi et ordinandi possident potestatem.

The Canons and Constitutions, which go under the name of the *Apostles'* though clearly the products of a later age, required as indispensable the presence of but two. These testimonies do not, as is generally supposed, exclude Presbyters from participating in the process, though the presumption is that, as their co-operation was not regarded as essential, they soon ceased to unite with the Bishops in this act of ecclesiastical authority. That they had the right to unite with them is plain from the case of Pelagius. Now, if in the times of the Apostles the parochial Presbytery was the proper ordaining body, how was so remarkable a change effected? How, especially, did it happen in so short a time that Ruling Elders should rarely exercise the right of ordination except in reference to their own associates? There are two causes which will be found, I apprehend, to explain the phenomenon. After the extraordinary officers of the Church had ceased, it devolved, of course, upon the neighbouring churches to supply new congregations with ecclesiastical officers; and as it would be more convenient for the pastors to meet—as they were the persons most likely to be known and most likely to be summoned to attend in council—the Presbytery which ordained in new and vacant churches was composed for the most part of preaching Elders or Bishops. Presbyters at first were not excluded, but as they were summoned only through their pastors, and as all the neighbouring pastors were summoned alike, a college of Elders could be easily constituted without their presence, and hence they no doubt soon ceased to appear. In a vacant church the existing Eldership might have ordained, but as they had been always accustomed to the presidency of a pastor, they would call in the neighbouring Bishops to assist them.[1] Hence, there soon arose a distinction betwixt

[1] The passage from Jerome has been already cited. It is a mistake to suppose that he has reference to *the election* of a Bishop, because (1) that was done by the people, as Cyprian testifies (Epist. 68), and (2) the Bishop is spoken of as *elected* when the Presbyters do what is implied in the verb *nominabant*. How did the Presbyter elect get the *name* of

the method of ordaining a Presbyter and the method of ordaining a Bishop. The one continued to be done by the parochial Presbytery, and the other was done by a provincial Presbytery, and the Canons which have already been noticed, and which are usually pleaded as proof of the exclusive right of Bishops to ordain, should perhaps be regarded as only defining the number of Ministers necessary to constitute a quorum of the provincial Presbytery. There was no need to mention Elders, because they were always found on the spot in the case of vacant churches without being gathered from other congregations, and because in new churches, Ministers being Elders, a true Presbytery existed, though composed only of the rulers who preached. Such a provincial Presbytery was evidently necessary; it was only a fuller development of the same principle on which the Session was founded. In the age of Cyprian, however, it was an occasional body, not a permanent one, as it is with us—regularly meeting upon its own adjournment. It was called together only when needed to ordain a Bishop. In this way arose the distinction betwixt the ordination of Bishops and Elders. What was first a mere custom, originating in convenience, soon became the law of the Church. The change thus accidentally introduced was next confirmed by a miserable fallacy. Ordination was early regarded as a sort of spiritual generation of Ministers; and, as like could only beget like, it was supposed impossible for those who could not preach to invest others with authority to do so. The ordainer could only transmit to the ordained the rights which he himself possessed, and hence Presbyters were regarded as incompetent, from the nature of their duties, to participate in the ordination of any but Presbyters. This false principle of itself, without any previous neglect on the part of the Elders, would have been sufficient to exclude them from the provincial Presbytery. An error of this sort is too strong for argument; ancient customs and prescriptive

Bishop? Evidently by *ordination*. This installed him in the office, and of course gave him the name.

rights might have been pleaded in vain; and in spite of all the considerations drawn from apostolic practice, the fallacy would have ultimately triumphed. The power of a sophism to drown the voice of reason and Scripture may be seen in the case of transubstantiation, which led to the withholding of the cup from the laity; though this measure of high-handed tyranny was in open defiance of law, precedent and truth. Combine this principle, however, with the previous neglect of the Elders, and the foundations of Prelacy are open, palpable and clear. When the Presbyters were excluded from the provincial Presbytery, Bishops became a distinct order, superior to Elders and accountable only to God. Now, that both the causes really existed as facts cannot be denied. The letters of Cyprian show that it was the custom on the death of a Bishop to issue such a circular to the neighbouring Bishops, and that the presence of all the Bishops in a province at the ordination of a successor in the vacant church was usually requested.[1] The first canon of the fourth Council of Carthage, in prescribing the examination of the Bishop to be ordained, adds that when he has given satisfaction touching his faith and qualifications "he should then be ordained by the consent of the clergy and people, and with the concurrence of the Bishops of the whole province."[2] Other testimonies to the same purport might be easily collected, but the custom will hardly be disputed. That the erroneous conception in regard to the nature of ordination, to which reference has been made, prevailed at an early period may be gathered from the remark of Epiphanius, that "the order of Bishops begets fathers to the Church, which the order of Presbyters cannot do, but only begets sons by the regeneration of baptisms."[3] This passage requires no com-

[1] Cyprian, Epist. 63. [2] Labb. ii., p. 1199.

[3] Hæres. 75. In the misconception of Epiphanius we see the germ of the "sacrament of orders." In such fatal and miserable blunders, such gross and flagrant fallacies, one is often reminded of the memorable parody of Johnson: "Who drives fat oxen must himself be fat." It is to be regretted that even in the Presbyterian Church there is too strong a

ment. If these two causes, which unquestionably existed, were adequate to produce the effect, it is easy to explain how, consistently with the original right of Elders to ordain, they gradually ceased to exercise it, and eventually surrendered it in the case of Bishops. This hypothesis completely reconciles the apparently conflicting testimony of ancient documents. From Jerome we would infer that it was the custom of the Elders at Alexandria to ordain their own Bishop. From the authorities cited above it would appear to have been the custom of the Church to ordain a new Bishop by a council of his neighbours of whom three were necessary to constitute a quorum. Both may have been true. In later times we find no allusion to the Elders—their touch was profaneness—because the neighbouring Bishops had taken the matter into their own hands. The

disposition to look upon ordination as a mystic charm which communicates an invisible *charisma* to the person ordained, which he did not possess before. Divested of all obscurity, it is evidently nothing more than a process or series of acts by which the people of God and the rulers of His Church manifest their conviction of a Divine call to the office of ruling and teaching. The people express their approbation by election; the rulers of the Church, after a full and thorough examination, express theirs by prayer and the imposition of hands. They declare in this way that the candidate before them is called of God to the Elder's office. What is there in this inconsistent with the character of him who rules? And why may not one ruler as well as another express his conviction that A or B is called of God, and accordingly commend him by prayer and imposition of hands to the Word of His grace? If the Presbyterial part of ordination is not a *sacrament*, but a simple act of *government*, I confess it passes my comprehension to perceive why an Elder may not join in it. If it were a sacrament then it would be a seal of the covenant, and a symbol of its blessings. To administer it under such circumstances would be a *virtual preaching*, and therefore a Ruling Elder could not do it. Hence, the Session examines a man and admits him to the communion of the Church, but the *pastor alone baptizes*. Baptism, however, does not *admit* the individual into the church; it is administered to him because he *is* in and of course entitled to its privileges. The act of the Session—the *parochial Presbytery—admitted* him; by their vote they expressed their conviction that he was *in* the covenant, and *therefore* the pastor applies to him its precious seal, and so in reference to the Lord's Supper. There is no alternative between making ordination a sacrament and allowing Elders to unite in the process. One or the other must be done.

progress can be distinctly traced by which the ordination of Bishops passed from the hands of the parochial Presbytery to the episcopal Council. That whole mass of testimony, therefore, which seems to vest the right of ordaining Ministers exclusively in the hands of Ministers is thus satisfactorily discarded, and the Divine authority of Ruling Elders to impose hands in the ordination of Preachers is placed on an impregnable basis.

RESOLUTIONS AS TO THE ELDERSHIP.

1. *Resolved*, That the office of the Ruling Elder, as it exists in the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, is neither the creature of the brotherhood in a particular congregation nor of the Church at large; that its rights, powers and authority are in no sense delegated to it from the people, but are derived from the immediate appointment and institution of Christ, the only King and Head of the Church.

2. *Resolved*, That, according to the Scriptures, all church authority is vested exclusively in the hands of Elders, and the right of bearing rule in the house of God is the distinctive peculiarity of their office.

3. *Resolved*, That all Presbyters or Elders are equal, and, when convened in ecclesiastical courts, are entitled to the exercise of the same rights and privileges, unless there be an express consent to the contrary. The Presbyterate is *one*, though held by two classes of men—those who preach and those who do not.

4. *Resolved*, That the right of rule pertains to Ministers of the Gospel not *as Preachers*, but *as Elders;* all who are rightfully called unto the ministry being, at the same time, called to the eldership. Hence, it is expressly said in our Form of Government, that the Pastor is called an *Elder* or *Presbyter*, because "it is his duty to be grave and prudent and an example of the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ."

5. *Resolved*, That, as the imposition of hands in the ordination of Ministers is a part of the process by which the Presbytery *as a court* sets apart the candidate to the office

of the ministry, those Elders who rule and do not preach are, when members of the court, as much entitled to unite in the act as those who rule and preach.

6. *Resolved*, That the government of the Church should be conducted by assemblies of Elders, constituting congregational, classical and synodical Presbyteries; and that all these courts being essentially the same, ought to be composed of the same materials; and as in the present state of the Presbyterian Church there are many Ministers who are not in the actual exercise of the office of Elder—who are the chosen representatives of no people—it is contrary to the spirit of the Presbyterian system to suffer any court to be constituted without the presence of a Ruling Elder.

PRESBYTERIANISM AND THE ELDERSHIP.

THE Apostle Paul, in his first Epistle to the Thessalonian Christians, thus addresses them: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."[1] All commentators are agreed that the Rulers of the Church are the persons whom the Apostle is here exhorting the Thessalonians to treat with the deference and respect which were due to their character and office. At the same time the passage, in the description of their functions which it furnishes, indicates the duties of the Rulers themselves—they must labour, govern or preside and admonish. It therefore affords a clear and decisive proof, that the Primitive Church had a government of some sort, that the distinction was familiar and well understood between the rulers and the ruled. The early congregations were not societies in which there was no settled order, in which everything depended on the time and the occasion. They were, from the beginning, organized bodies with a definite polity. Other passages of the same sort may be appealed to: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God."[2] This exhortation occurs in a letter at least ten years later than that to the Thessalonian Church. There is a special value in these incidental references, as showing that the facts were notorious and unquestionable. I purpose to give a brief exposition of our faith upon this whole subject.

The term *Presbyterian* is primarily distinctive of our no-

[1] 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. [2] Heb. xiii. 7.

tions of church-polity, and in this relation, it has a wider and a narrower application. In its widest application, it includes all those who deny that the government of the Church is entrusted to an order of men higher than Presbyters or Elders—who, in other words, maintain the official parity of the ministry. In this sense it is simply the opposite of Prelatic or Episcopalian, and extends to all denominations who deny the Divine appointment of Diocesan Bishops. Hence it includes Independents, and even Methodists. All who affirm the official equality of the rulers of the Church are essentially Presbyterian. In its narrower application, it embraces only those who place the government of the Church in the hands of representative assemblies, composed exclusively of Presbyters or Elders. This is its proper and definite use. Using the term in this sense I propose,

I. To state the principles of Presbyterian church-government in general.

1. The first principle is that of the unity of the Church. As the body of Christ the Church is one. The members of it may differ as to their functions, but they are one by virtue of their union to Christ their Head. So far as the invisible Church is concerned this is clear. That Church is the whole multitude which was conceived in the eternal purpose of redemption, and given to Christ to be delivered from sin and death. As this Church manifests itself the whole number thus designated are regenerated and united to Christ. All are incorporated into Him, and must therefore constitute one organized whole, which is the Holy Catholic Church. But if the Church, as thus conceived, is one, the visible Church, which is designed to call the invisible to union with Christ, must also be one. The relation between the two is so close that it is unwarrantable to predicate unity of the one and the want of unity of the other. The visible or professing Church approaches perfection as it seeks to realize the invisible or spiritual. The two ought to coincide, and the purity of the outward is determined by its approx-

imation to the inward. A Church, therefore, which cannot realize a visible unity, and thus aim to coincide with the invisible Church, is self-condemned; and any Constitution which does not recognize this fact is convicted of being unscriptural. This principle of the unity of the Church lies at the foundation of the Presbyterian polity, and all its peculiarities are designed to bring this out and give it a formal expression. It is singular that the only two bodies which claim to realize this unity are in the deadliest antagonism—each charging the other with being Antichrist. They are the Church of Rome and the Presbyterian Church. Rome does, in a certain sense, give unity to the Church. She compacts all its parts. There is no stronger outward representation of unity than is furnished in her system of government. There is, however, this marked difference between the two cases. The Church of Rome undertakes to exhibit the body in its unity with an earthly head, to exhibit Christ as well as His members; the Presbyterian Church exhibits in visible unity on earth the body only, and connects it with a heavenly Head. The Bishop of Rome claims to be the head of the Church. He alone who is in communion with him is a member of the Church, and consequently a member of Christ. Now he must be either a real and true head, or a symbolical and typical head. If the former, then, as a body cannot have two real heads without being a monster, the headship of Christ is displaced. If the latter, then, as the body must partake of the nature of its head, the Church is a symbolical and typical body, and the reality of the Church is destroyed.

2. The second principle of the Presbyterian system is, that unity is realized by representative assemblies. The government of the Church is not entrusted to individuals, nor to the mass of believers, but to councils. Every judicial and legislative function is performed by courts alone. Government is not administered by a single individual—that would be monarchy; nor by a privileged class—that would be oligarchy; nor immediately by the people—that

would be democracy; but it is administered by representative assemblies. These constitute a bond which brings all the parts together into unity and gives the Church the property of indefinite expansibility. Let us suppose that there is but one congregation of Christ's people. They meet and choose representatives. These representatives assemble in parliament to deliberate in reference to the interests of the whole body. This parliament would extend over the universal Church, for, according to the supposition, the whole Church is in one congregation. Suppose now two congregations to exist. They elect their representatives, who meet in common. The representative assembly now covers two congregations. Enlarge these suppositions, and it will be perceived that the principle of representation is capable of embodying any number of believers. Whole continents may be made one body. The principle is susceptible of application to the whole human race, and may, therefore, embody the whole Church on earth in one grand parliament. This shows that there is no specific difference between our various representative assemblies. The principle is the same in all the courts of our Church. There is but one Church, a set of congregations bound together by the *nexus* of one parliament. Each congregation has every element of the universal Church, and the universal Church has no attribute which may not be found in each congregation. There is no organic difference between the Church-Session and the largest Assembly. All the courts recognize the unity of the whole body. It is certainly a beautiful system.

The question may be asked, How do the different parts of the Church work together? The whole Church cannot meet in common, and we deny that there is any visible head which exercises supreme authority over all. The answer is, That the principle of representation is the bond of union and the medium of common action. Our system differs from Episcopacy, which consists of a series of monarchies. One diocese is under the control of a single man. Two dioceses are independent of each other. The Church

is split up into a great number of provincial monarchies characterized by no visible unity. The only principle upon which unity can be secured under this system is that which provides one visible head for the whole Church. Under the Congregational system each congregation is independent of all others. It is worthy of note how all Churches have practically acknowledged the representative feature of Presbyterianism. Episcopacy, for example, has its general conventions in which, in the attempt to realize unity, the parliamentary principle is grafted upon the system. Congregationalism has its councils, the existence of which is a tribute to the importance of the representative principle. Even the Pope, on occasions of great emergency, calls councils to decide disputed questions. We are but carrying out, then, a principle the practical necessity of which is recognized by all Churches, but which is inherent in the very nature of the Presbyterian system alone.

3. The third principle is, that the elements which make up these representative assemblies are Elders, who are rulers chosen freely by the people. The word *Presbyter* or *Elder* primarily denotes age, secondarily authority, but never, without some qualifying epithet, supreme authority. It signifies an officer invested with delegated authority. It expresses precisely the sort of power which belongs to rulers in the house of God. Christ is supreme, and all other rulers are subordinate to Him, and derive their authority from Him. The Presbyter acts under a prescribed Constitution. He has no supreme control, but is simply an agent of Christ through whom He dispenses His rule. But none are permitted to exercise authority except those who are called by Christ through the free choice of His people. They must have the confidence of the people.

4. The fourth principle is, that the power is primarily in the body and is exercised through organized courts. The society, as a Commonwealth, possesses all these powers and capacities potentially, and by election actually exercises them—that is, the Commonwealth, as such, has all church-

power in it, but develops that power organically by assigning men to the offices with which its exercise is connected. This principle may be illustrated by the analogy of our corporeal system. The life which resides potentially in it is manifested and developed into exercise through the bodily organism. The Church is a living body, and its courts are the organized machinery for manifesting its life. It deserves to be considered, too, that representation founded in the free choice of the people arises from the nature of church-power. The power is in the hands of none but the Church. She constitutes these orders, and chooses these rulers. Any theory, therefore, which admits of the appointment of rulers except by the free acts of the Church is evinced to be false. The rulers must be elected by the Church. Hence, the assemblies which are composed of these rulers are the Church. The Session, the Presbytery, the Synod, the Assembly, are properly called *the Church* as they manifest its living power.

So much for our system of government. The brief time allotted has admitted of only a statement of the outline of its principles. Let it not be understood that, in advocating these views, we unchurch other evangelical denominations. If the question be, *Who* are the Church? we would unhesitatingly say, that we recognize all who are regenerated and justified and therefore united to Christ as members of His Church. We cheerfully and cordially hold fellowship with all Christ's people. But the principles which have been presented lie at the foundation of the *complete* organization of the Church of Christ.

II. I propose, in the second place, briefly to indicate the nature and duties of the office of the Elder.

1. The nature of the office. It is clear that, in the Scriptures, it is recognized under the terms *Presbyter*, *Bishop* and *Elder*. Even advocates of apostolical succession concede Bishops and Presbyters to be one. The primary notion of the Elder's office is a delegated right to rule. All who are Elders exercise rule, and all who exercise rule

are Elders, but among Elders who are distinguished by this generic attribute of ruling there is a clear distinction as to *function*. (1.) There are those who labour in the Word and doctrine. The Scriptures recognize no order which *simply* preaches. (2.) There are rulers or governors simply—a class coming directly from the people. The two classes are the complement of each other, and in the concerted deliberation and action of the two truth and wisdom are attained. Take, as an illustration, the government of England. The parliament consists of two chambers, and concurrent legislation is the result. So in America. All the States have two houses in their Legislatures. The Senate is composed of able, wise and sober men. In the House you have popular representation through which the people are directly heard. The two operate as checks upon each other. One chamber was for a while tried in Europe, and democracy ruled to anarchy. In like manner, the Presbyterian system provides senators in the Preachers and popular representatives in the Ruling Elders. They meet in one body, and the result is a concurrent one in which action is reached that is removed from the rigour of impracticable theories, the violence of passion and the fickleness of caprice.

The word *Elder* denotes a Ruler and nothing more; but in the Scriptures we find other functions superadded to the office—such as teaching. Hence some have contended that the New Testament Elder is only a Preacher. Against this hypothesis the following considerations are urged:

(1.) The presumption arising from the use of the term.

(2.) This presumption is increased by the nature of the allusions. The polity of the Church is nowhere minutely described, but it is treated as a thing well known. The reason is, that the allusions occur in letters, and that the *form* was no novelty. It was an old, familiar thing in a new relation. That old thing was the Synagogue, and *there* the Elder was a Ruler, and there were Elders there who had nothing to do but to rule.

(3.) The plurality of Elders in the churches.

(4.) The express language of Scripture: 1 Tim. v. 17.

2. The duties of the office. In general, these are to govern, to rule, to administer the discipline of God's house. To this end Elders possess:

(1.) Several power—power to rebuke, exhort, comfort, admonish, in the exercise of individual influence.

(2.) Joint power—power exercised in courts, to deliberate and vote, and to admit, to exclude and to censure.

More particularly, it is the duty of Elders,

(1.) To provide for the maintenance of Gospel ordinances. It is not enough for them barely to get a Minister, but to see that the work of the whole Church is adequately discharged. The present distressing vacancies are probably due in part to a failure in the proper performance of this department of duty. Ruling Elders are men to quicken the pulse of spiritual life in our congregations and to confirm the obligation to carry forward the Gospel at home and abroad.

(2.) To pay great attention to the inspection of parishes; and in order that this work should be compassed it is necessary that congregations should be divided into districts, and that a certain section should be assigned to the special oversight of each Ruling Elder.

(3.) To maintain the discipline of the Church as well in the exercise of their several power in counselling, admonishing and rebuking the flock, as in that of their joint power in administering the censures of a court.

It may be added that it is the duty of Ruling Elders to encourage and sustain all legitimate efforts to extend the Gospel throughout the world. The Church is partly asleep in the face of dying nations. It is a solemn obligation resting upon Elders to co-operate with courts, Ministers and people in diffusing the knowledge of Christ's name and the inestimable blessings of His Gospel to the farthest limits of the earth.

III. It only remains very briefly to state the qualifications

of the Ruling Elder. These are, 1. True godliness; 2. Good sense; 3. Tenderness. These make an Elder indeed. We often mistake the qualities that are necessary to the efficiency of the office. It is not learning so much, or social position, or outward advantages that are required. Give us godly men, men understanding the Gospel, men courteous, tender and possessed of the confidence of the people, and in connection with the Ministers of the Word, they will accomplish an incalculably great and blessed work.

CHURCH-OPERATIONS.

PREFATORY NOTE.

These discussions on Church-operations have reference both to organic principles and to practical methods. The *first* was published in the *Baltimore Literary and Religious Magazine* in 1841. The *second* appeared one year after it in the *Spirit of the Nineteenth Century* as a reply to Dr. Smyth's Review of the first. That Review will be found in the Appendix. The *third* is the report of a debate in the Assembly at Rochester in 1860. It was prepared by the senior Editor of this volume and published in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* for July, 1860. Dr. Thornwell expressly endorsed this report as accurate, and Dr. Hodge's speech is given with equal faithfulness. The closing speech of Dr. Hodge is not inserted here for the reason that the views which it succinctly enunciated were afterward elaborated and published by himself in the *Princeton Review*. That article also will be found in the Appendix. The *fourth* was Dr. Thornwell's reply to Dr. Hodge's article just referred to. It appeared in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* for January, 1861.

Touching the employment of Deacons in the general service of the Church, the conduct of Missions by Presbyteries, and the unscripturalness and unconstitutionality of Boards, Dr. Thornwell was content with urging his views earnestly, but he made it a principle through life always to submit to his brethren in matters of established and recognized policy; his temper had in it no spice whatever of the seditious or the radical. The discussion of the Deacon question somewhat antedated that of the Ruling Elder, but the latter became the more prominent, and to a great extent extruded the former, so that he did not have the same opportunity to develop his views of the Diaconate which the course of events furnished in regard to the Eldership. As to the conduct of Missions, while insisting on the competency of the Presbyteries and preferring their control to that of Boards, he did not object on principle to the Assembly's undertaking the management of that work, provided that its control was *direct* through a mere Executive Committee. No man had more to do than he with the organization of our present Executive Committees. In fact his principles regarding Boards have been fully and cordially adopted by our Church.

ARGUMENT AGAINST CHURCH-BOARDS.

THE policy, which has so extensively prevailed for the last half century among all denominations of Christians, of conducting what are called "benevolent enterprises" by the instrumentality of Boards, we are fully persuaded, has been adopted by the Presbyterian Church in this country without examination and without reflection. Professing to be regulated in doctrine, discipline and order by an exclusive regard for the Word of God, and a firm rejection of all human authority in matters of religious faith and practice, it is not a little remarkable that she should yet be so ready to fall in with the current of popular opinion on questions of such momentous importance as those connected with the work of Missions Foreign and Domestic, and the business of training a rising ministry and providing for the diffusion and defence of the truths of the Gospel.

In the very midst of her earnest efforts for reformation and for truth, whilst contending against unscriptural doctrines and remonstrating against unscriptural abuses, she forgets her zeal for the Divine authority, and lends her sanction to a system of measures which certainly has no surer foundation than that of prescription, and that not even of an ancient date.

This singular inconsistency may be, at least partially, accounted for by the peculiar circumstances in which the Church found herself placed during her great and glorious

contest.[1] All reformations are gradual. The evils of ancient abuses do not develop themselves *at once*. The light breaks in upon the mind slowly and feebly at first, like the first beams of morning, and, like them, also waxes stronger and stronger until all darkness is dissipated and the hidden things of dishonesty are openly revealed. Great principles are clearly apprehended and acknowledged before their application in all their bearings and to their full extent is distinctly perceived. Some prominent corruption arrests the attention, awakens inquiry, and leads the mind to a clear perception of the remedy in some great truth which has been overlooked or abandoned. And it is not until the remedy has been successfully applied to the pressing evils which first excited the spirit of examination, that a larger application is perceived to be possible or felt to be desirable. Absorbed in one great subject of attention, the mind overlooks all smaller matters or matters of less immediate urgency.

In our recent contest, one great principle for which the Church was so zealously contending was that of ecclesiastical responsibility. The first enormous and commanding evil of the voluntary societies, which arrested attention and aroused opposition, was their absolute independence of the authority and jurisdiction of the Church. For years, consequently, her efforts were directed to the single point that the *Church*, as such, should have the control of all the spiritual enterprises of Christian benevolence. It was not a subject of discussion *how* the Church could most efficiently conduct these matters in her ecclesiastical capacity: by common consent, it was admitted that societies or specific organizations for the purpose were indispensably necessary; and the Church felt that she would gain her point, and secure the desired oversight and control, by placing these societies or organizations under her own supervision. It never occurred to her to discuss the yet farther bearing of the great principle which she was labouring to carry out upon the actual

[1] [That of 1837 and 1838.—Eds.]

organization of the Boards themselves. It never occurred to her to ask the question, whether what she does by an organization unknown to her Constitution is really any more done by her in her *ecclesiastical capacity*, than what she did by the voluntary societies. In her anxiety to throw off an abuse of the former system, she overlooked the inherent evils of the system itself and destroyed nothing but its voluntary character. Her Boards are only substitutes for the voluntary societies, and can no more justly be regarded as the *Church* than the Home Missionary Association or the American Education Society. The principle is, that these enterprises must be carried on by the Church as a visible, organized body; the fact is, that they are conducted by institutions appointed by the Church, and not by the Church in her ecclesiastical capacity. The Church pushed the application of her principle no farther than to the arresting of the operation of purely voluntary societies; it was reserved for less troubled times to carry it out and put her and all her institutions upon the venerable platform of Christ and His Apostles.

That time, we trust, has arrived; and we do humbly hope, that the next General Assembly, standing upon the same principles of ecclesiastical responsibility with its illustrious predecessors of 1837 and 1838, and having its attention confined to no single and absorbing evil, will take a wide and commanding view of the whole subject, and make all the changes which are necessary that our Church, as such, and without the aid of substitutes and agents, may fulfil all the trust which God has committed to her. We are fully satisfied that the system of Boards and permanent Agencies falls very far short of the spirit of our Constitution, and, so far from being a blessing, will in the end prove a deplorable calamity unless speedily abandoned. We do not object to this system on account of slight and accidental evils which wisdom and experience may remove without affecting the essential elements of the system itself. Such evils or rather abuses exist. They are to be found in those regula-

tions by which honorary membership is purchased for money, an enormity similar to the sin of Simon Magus, for which he met the rebuke of the Apostle; in their tendency to perpetuate themselves; and in the very partial amount of real investigation to which their proceedings are ever subjected. These are objections to the present plan on which our Boards are organized; but they lie not so much against the system itself as against partial and accidental abuses. The objections which have influenced our minds are radical and fundamental. We believe that the system in its essential principles is directly subversive of the Constitution of our Church, unknown to the Word of God, and unsupported by any arguments of expediency or necessity which can commend it to the understanding of a Christian man.

I. These positions we shall endeavour to establish in order. First, then, Boards are directly subversive of the Form of Government embodied in the Constitution of our own Church. They involve a practical renunciation of Presbyterianism. The essential features of our ecclesiastical polity are the parity of the ministry; the office of Ruling Elder; and, a series of church-courts, rising one above another, and cementing the whole body together as one harmonious whole. "That," says Dr. Miller, "is a Presbyterian Church, in which the Presbytery is the radical and leading judicatory; in which Teaching and Ruling Presbyters or Elders have committed to them the watch and care of the whole flock; in which all Ministers of the Word and sacraments are equal; in which Ruling Elders, as the representatives of the people, form a part of all ecclesiastical assemblies, and partake in all authoritative acts equally with the Teaching Elders; and in which, by a series of judicatories rising one above another, each individual church is under the watch and care of its appropriate judicatory; and the whole body, by a system of review and control, is bound together as one homogeneous community. Wherever this system is found in operation in the Church of God, there is Presbyterianism." The only permanent officers in the

Church of God, which our Constitution recognizes, are Bishops, Elders and Deacons; the only courts are Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods and the General Assembly. These officers and these courts are treated in our Constitution as abundantly adequate to meet all the exigencies of the Church, and to do all that God requires her to do in her ecclesiastical capacity. We profess to trace this system to the Scriptures. We believe that it embodies the leading principles of Church government established by the Apostles of the Lord; and we cannot question its sufficiency without bringing a serious and blasphemous reproach upon the Spirit of inspiration. Whatever, therefore, is not done by Elders and Ministers, assembled in some one of the courts above mentioned, is not done by them as *Presbyterians*. It is only in these courts that we recognize the Church as an organized body. Here, and here alone, do we find Presbyterianism.

Now we maintain that the system of Boards gives us a set of officers and a set of ecclesiastical courts entirely different from those of our Constitution. The Corresponding Secretary and the General Agent of these Boards are discharging the peculiar functions of neither Minister, Elder nor Deacon. They certainly are not Pastors, and are just as far from being Evangelists. They do not claim to be Ruling Elders, and much less would they submit to be called Deacons in the sense of our Book. What, then, are they? Where are their mixed and heterogeneous functions recognized as belonging to any single individual from the first to the last of our Constitution? They combine into one discordant whole some of the duties of every officer acknowledged in our system—they are two-thirds Deacons, one-sixth Elder, and one-sixth Preacher. The duties, and not the name, make the office. You may call them *Ministers*, and ordain them as such, but if they do not discharge constantly and faithfully the duties of Ministers, God assuredly does not regard them in that light, and man should not; and if the Church has marked out a routine of service which our

Constitution and the Word of God do not sanction as binding upon any single individual, if she has created a new sphere of labour and appointed men to fill it, she has been guilty of creating new offices and appointing new ecclesiastical officers. The offices under these Boards are not temporary trusts; they are a permanent vocation, just as much so as the pastoral office itself, and they who fill them live of their employments just as much as Ministers of Jesus live of the Gospel. They are permanent officers in the Church; and they are as perfectly distinct from the Deacon, the Elder and the Bishop, as these respectively are distinct from each other. We have no objection to the name *Corresponding Secretary, General Agent*, or any other mere name; but we do insist upon it, that new offices are made by human authority in the Church of God, in which various conflicting duties are brought together, and a discordant whole created, like Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold, silver, brass, iron and clay. The temporary business of a secretary or scribe in any public meeting we understand; the temporary agency of a Pastor for a specific purpose we acknowledge to be scriptural; but the appointing of men to a permanent and standing vocation, in which it is impossible to be faithful in any of the standing offices of the Church, we do not understand; for we have not so learned Presbyterianism.

But we object still farther, that the Boards themselves are to all intents and purposes ecclesiastical courts, exercising a power and jurisdiction in the Church of God in direct and unavoidable collision with the authority of the courts acknowledged by our Standards. It is a common but a very mistaken apprehension that Boards are merely Committees, invested with no other power and acting upon no other principle. Committees are usually appointed for one of two purposes—either to prepare and arrange business for the body which appoints them, or to execute some specific trust by the order and direction of the body to which they are responsible. Of the first kind are the Committees of Bills

and Overtures, and the Judicial Committee appointed by the Assembly at every meeting; and of the latter kind is a Committee of Presbytery to install a Pastor, or to receive the testimonials of Ministers from other Presbyteries, labouring within its bounds. It is clear that in neither of these views can any of the Boards of the Church be regarded merely as Committees. They neither prepare and digest business for the action of the Assembly—for they do it themselves; nor execute any specific trust according to the direction or command of the body which appoints them. They are confidential agents, acting upon their own suggestions and their own views of expediency and duty, without pretending to wait for positive orders from the General Assembly. They are clothed with plenary power to act and do as to them shall seem most advisable in all matters embraced in the general subject entrusted to their care.

This ample investiture of power renders them to all intents and purposes ecclesiastical courts. They exercise dominion in the Lord's house. To say that this is not their true character, because they are responsible to the General Assembly, would be to deny that the Presbytery is an ecclesiastical court, because it is responsible to the Synod, or to strip the Synod of its true character, because it in its turn is amenable to the Assembly. The possession and exercise of power distinguish a court; and as these are found in the Boards by a most unwarrantable perversion of our Constitution, they are promoted to a level with Sessions, Presbyteries and Synods. Here, then, we have a new system of ecclesiastical order. In addition to Pastors, Elders and Deacons we behold General Agents, Corresponding Secretaries and Executive Committees; in addition to the ancient and established judicatories of our Church we behold—as though Christ had left her inadequately furnished for her great work—a mighty system of Boards of equal authority and much wider operation; and already have these institutions become so intolerably arrogant in the exercise of their unlawful dominion, that they speak of the true judicatories of

the Church as their auxiliaries. They receive reports from Presbyteries and issue their directions, not in the spirit of a servant accounting to his master, but in the style of a feudal lord to his humble and obedient vassals.

If, then, these institutions are new ecclesiastical courts composed of new ecclesiastical officers, they are not Presbyterian, because no provision is made for them in our Constitution. The rule is universal, that in all positive grants of power no more can be claimed than is formally conveyed. A Constitution is a system of fundamental laws; whatever is not expressly stated or virtually implied is understood to be denied.

But we maintain further, that our Constitution contains acknowledgments of a power vested in our regular courts which is utterly inconsistent with the power vested by the Assembly in the Boards. We will take, for example, the Boards of Domestic and Foreign Missions. These institutions have the whole matter of preaching the Gospel to the destitute and ignorant at home and abroad entrusted to their charge. There are two great departments of the missionary work—spiritual and temporal; and the provisions for each of these are made in our Book. The power of ordaining the Evangelist belongs exclusively to Presbytery; so does the oversight of him and his charge if he should succeed in gathering a people to the Lord from among the outcasts of ignorance and sin. To the Presbytery, according to our Constitution, and to that alone, he is immediately responsible. To it he must give an account of his labours; from it he must seek counsel and direction; and in conformity with its requirements he is expected to walk. But, with the single exception of the power of ordaining and of instituting actual process for crime or heresy, the entire supervision of Missionaries and their work is committed to the Boards—in other words, the power and jurisdiction granted by the Constitution to the Presbyteries are vested by the Assembly in its own creatures. Look at the following grant of power to the Board of Foreign Missions in the 4th article of its

Constitution: "To the Executive Committee, etc., shall belong the duty of *appointing* all Missionaries and Agents; of designating their fields of labour; to authorize all appropriations and expenditures of money; and to take the particular direction and management of the Foreign Missionary work subject to the revision and control of the Board of Directors." Here is unquestionably the power of judging of the qualifications of Ministers—their fitness for particular stations; and here is a right conveyed to control and manage and direct their labours. Turn now to the Constitution of the Church. In chapter x., section 8, of the Form of Government it is written: "The Presbytery has power to examine and license candidates for the holy ministry; to ordain, install, remove and judge Ministers." Here the same powers, in part, are evidently granted to two different bodies — in the one case, they are granted by the Constitution, in the other by the Assembly. The Assembly unquestionably had no right to take from the Presbytery its constitutional authority, and to vest it in any other organization. It has no right to set aside the Constitution for any purpose whatever. The absurdity and confusion of vesting the same powers in different bodies are not likely to be felt except in cases of collision. If the Board should determine to send out a man as an Evangelist whom the Presbytery pronounced to be utterly unfit for the work, the Board might do it, and leave the Presbytery to lament the existence of a worm slowly eating out the very vitals of Presbyterianism. And in the same way the power which is delegated to the Board of Education interferes with the exclusive right of Presbytery to receive candidates for the holy ministry, and to regulate their studies during the period of their trials. The Boards introduce a plan of action and a system of operations which our fathers never contemplated, since they have made the most abundant provisions for doing successfully, and by the regular process of our courts, everything connected with the real interests of the Church which these recent and anomalous institutions undertake to

accomplish. It is plain that under the present system so far is Presbytery from being the radical and leading court, which in all Presbyterian Churches according to Dr. Miller it is, the Boards themselves are all in all, and the poor Presbyteries are dwindled down into mere auxiliaries—into hewers of wood and drawers of water.

The other department of duty connected with the Missionary work respects the making of adequate provision for the temporal support of the Evangelists and their families. For this business it is supposed that the Presbyteries are wholly unqualified. It has been frequently admitted that, while everything connected with the spiritual aspects of Domestic and Foreign Missions falls appropriately within the province of the Presbytery, there is no adequate arrangement in our Book for conducting the pecuniary matters of the various stations with efficiency and success. This, we apprehend, is a great mistake. In the first place, the Constitution expressly provides that the judicatory sending out any Missionary must support him.[1] In the second place, the Book provides that our churches should be furnished with a class of officers for the express purpose of attending to the temporal matters of the Church; and these Deacons might be made the collecting agents of the Presbytery in every congregation, and through them the necessary funds could be easily obtained and without expense. For transmission to foreign parts, nothing more would be necessary than simply to employ either some extensive merchant in any of our large cities who for the usual percentage would attend to the whole matter, or a Committee of Deacons appointed by the Assembly for the purpose. So far, then, as the collection and disbursement of funds are concerned, our Constitution has made the most abundant provision.

We know of nothing that more strikingly illustrates the practical wisdom of the Divine provision of Deacons as collecting agents in each congregation than the fact that, after long and mature experience, the American Board has recom-

[1] Form of Government, chap. xviii.

mended the appointment of similar Agents in each congregation contributing to its funds as the most successful method of increasing its resources. Our Book, however, does not confine Deacons to particular congregations. There should be a competent number of them in each particular Church, but we insist upon it that Presbyteries, Synods and the General Assembly should also have the Deacons to attend to their pecuniary matters. Those ordained at Jerusalem were not confined to a specific congregation, but acted for the whole College of Apostles. By entrusting all pecuniary matters into the hands of men ordained under solemn sanctions for the purpose, our spiritual courts would soon cease to be what they are to an alarming extent at present—mere corporations for secular business. If all our Boards were converted into mere benches of Deacons, commissioned only to disburse funds under the direction of the spiritual courts, there would be no serious ground of objection to them; but in their present form they are lords and masters of the whole Church. They are virtually the head of the Church: their will is law, their authority irresistible, and they combine what God has separated—the *purse* and the *keys*.

If the foregoing remarks are well founded, and the whole power which is now lodged in the Boards in reference to every department of their work, whether spiritual or temporal, belongs constitutionally to other bodies, the argument is unanswerable that these Boards are subversive of Presbyterianism. It is vain to urge that our fathers never contemplated the extended scale of benevolent operations which God in His Providence has enabled us to carry forward. They were men deeply imbued with the Spirit of all grace; they understood well, for they had faithfully studied, the appropriate functions of the Church; they had looked narrowly and closely into the nature, arrangement and powers of the system of ecclesiastical action which Christ and His Apostles had established; they felt it to be adequate to all the exigencies of any age or any part of the world, and in

the fear of God they endeavoured to construct all things according to the pattern shown to them in the Mount. We, however, in the fulness of our wisdom and the enlargement of our views, have constructed a different system; and the question is now forced upon all sound and conscientious Presbyterians, whether they will abide by their ancient, venerable and scriptural Standards, or swear allegiance to the new order of things which has imperceptibly grown up and silently stolen upon us.

Independently of the fact that the Boards are ecclesiastical courts, possessing, to a considerable extent, co-ordinate jurisdiction with the Presbyteries themselves, their unconstitutionality will farther appear from the tendency of their practical working to introduce a system of virtual Prelacy. The parity of the ministry is a fundamental principle among all Presbyterians. Whatever differences superior piety, learning and talents may make in the *man*, we allow no difference in the *office*. We tolerate no official authority in one Minister above another. Our system does not admit it. But the fact is unquestionable that the various officers of our Boards are invested with a control over their brethren, and a power in the Church, just as real and just as dangerous as the authority of a Prelate. They constitute a college of ecclesiastical functionaries who determine the character and shape the destinies of the Presbyterian Church in these United States of America. Ministers receive commissions from them, and upon them are dependent for their daily bread; and no slavery is more abject than that which grows out of a hopeless dependence upon others for the necessaries and comforts of life. This tie will bind to obedience much more firmly, in ordinary cases, than the ordination vow of the humble priest to reverence and obey his superior lord. We will dare adventure the assertion that there is not a Presbytery in the land which possesses so real a power, and which can exercise it so speedily and efficiently, as the Corresponding Secretaries and Executive Committees of our different Boards. In 1837, we rebuked

the operations of the Home Missionary and American Education Societies, not only on account of their irresponsible character, but also on account of the enormous power which they were able to wield against us. And what less power do our own institutions possess? Are they anything more than substitutes for the voluntary societies, possessing the same inherent elements of mischief and disorder if they should ever fall into the hands of bad men?

The following remarks, in confirmation of our own views, we quote from a source entitled to much consideration:

"Our experience teaches us, as reason also shows, that the great effect of these Boards is to cast all power into a few central hands, and render them as independent as possible of the action of the Assembly. The notion of any *responsibility* in these Boards is a mere figment. Two or three persons control the proceedings of the Executive Committee; and then when the Board comes to review their doings, they have become the doings of the *Committee*, and have the weight of that whole body; and for this reason should be, as they argue—and generally are—confirmed by the Board; then the same doings are, for a like reason, approved in the Assembly; and the Church, having Committee, Board and Assembly to vouch, of course, approve; but remotely A and B, after all, did the thing, and there never was any just or real supervision of their action. These Boards with other nominal ecclesiastical operations are all so located and filled, that, in truth, the Presbyterian Church is managed, through these contrivances, by about two or three dozen persons, in all its great practical operations. Their efficient managers are as absolute a hierarchy as exists upon the face of the earth; and if they are the best hierarchy of all—nay, even a Presbyterian hierarchy—still let its true nature be distinctly seen and known. There are, in effect, residing in Philadelphia, about one dozen persons, Ministers and laymen, who are the real Board of Missions, Board of Publication and Board of Education; and who have the official power to be largely all the rest if they

please." Well and forcibly does the writer add: "Now, is there a man in the whole Church who would be content to admit such a result, if it were *nakedly* propounded? Not one. But interpose a variety of contrivances called *Boards, Committees*, and what not, and then the whole Church very calmly submits to it; though really the result is nearly the same. Is there a man in the Church who believes that any four or five Ministers in Philadelphia are at all superior to four or five hundred of their brethren—much less, so much so as to justify such a result even if it were otherwise scriptural, constitutional, profitable, modest or presbyterial? Not one." And, from the very nature of the case, this undue accumulation of power in a few hands must always be the practical result of this system. This single fact shows that it is rotten to the core and utterly alien from all our habits, feelings and associations as Presbyterians. The machinery which no human wisdom can put into operation without destroying the official equality of the ministry — which always and inevitably works a few men to the uppermost seats in the synagogue—may answer for Papists and Prelatists, but it is death to Presbyterianism. His holiness the Pope may in consistency with his ecclesiastical principles encourage the Propaganda as a prodigious engine for the accumulation of all power, but Presbyterians renounce their creed and deny their polity when they lend their sanction to any institutions even remotely modelled after such instruments of ecclesiastical despotism.

Under this general head of the anti-Presbyterian character of the Boards, we will suggest another consideration which has commended itself very forcibly to our minds. It appears to us that this whole system involves an abandonment of the great principle that it is the duty of the Church, as such, in her ecclesiastical capacity, to conduct every department of the work which the Saviour has committed to her. To this principle the Presbyterian Church is pledged; for this principle she earnestly contended through years of darkness, anxiety and apprehension. In this contest we

participated heartily and warmly according to the measure of grace which was given us, and we can see no reason for abandoning it when victory is now within our reach. "We believe," said the Assembly of 1837, in her circular letter to all sister Churches, "that if there be any departments of Christian effort to which the Church of Christ is bound, *in her appropriate character*, to direct her attention and her unwearied labours, they are those which relate to the training of her sons for the holy ministry, and sending the Gospel to those who have it not, and planting churches in the dark and destitute portions of the earth." Here the obligation of the Church in her "*appropriate character*" is distinctly admitted, and given as one reason for rebuking the various voluntary associations which, without any warrant from God, had taken these matters into their own hands. The question now arises, whether what is done by Boards is really done by the *Church as such*, "*in her appropriate character*," or, as Dr. Miller expresses it, in her "ecclesiastical capacity"? Are the Boards, in other words, the Church? Have they been constituted its authorized Rulers by its glorious Head? Do they pretend to exercise dominion in the Lord's house by a Divine warrant? Are they Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods or Assemblies?—the only courts, according to our Constitution, in which we find the Church as a visible organization or "in her appropriate character" or "ecclesiastical capacity"? Unquestionably not. Then to act by or through them is not to act in our ecclesiastical capacity. It is to renounce the principle for which we have struggled for years just at the moment when complete and glorious victory is within our reach. The Boards are *Agents, confidential agents*, for the Church, but they are not the Church herself. They are no more the *Church* than the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was when the Assembly recommended it to general confidence, and employed it as the medium of its own Foreign Missionary transactions. The only difference in the two cases is the difference between consent and appointment. She consented

to delegate her duties in the one case to an existing institution, and in the other she creates and delegates by the same act. The one is made to her hands and she consents to the exercise of a certain trust by it; the other she makes herself: but the real and only important question is, not, Who made the institutions? but, *What* are they after they *are made?* And if they are not the Church in her appropriate character or ecclesiastical capacity, the plighted faith of the Assembly requires it to abandon them: that faith is pledged that the *Church* shall attend to these things and entrust it to no foreign hands. It is vain to reply that the transactions of our Boards are really the doings of the Church in her appropriate character, because in her ecclesiastical capacity and by her highest judicatory she actually created them, and they act only by the authority which they received from her; so that the power of the Boards is the power of the Church turned into a particular channel by her own act. This reasoning establishes nothing more than the confidential agency of the Boards, but does not identify them with our acknowledged ecclesiastical courts any more than a power of attorney identifies the agent with his principal. The Church puts the work out of her own hands under such circumstances that she can recall it at any moment, or superintend to a certain extent the operations of her Agents, but still it is these Agents who do it in her name, and *not she herself;* and her favourite principle is as completely abandoned as if she had left the whole matter in the hands of the voluntary societies. But we maintain still farther, that, if that sort of unity which an agency implies could establish the identity of the Boards with the Church in her appropriate character or ecclesiastical capacity, she has no right to entrust her own peculiar functions to any agent, no matter how closely connected with herself. The duties of the Church are duties which rest upon her by the authority of God. He has given her the organization which she possesses for the purpose of discharging these duties. She can, therefore, no more throw them off upon others, than a man

can delegate to his neighbour the care of his own family and abandon himself to idleness and ease. If our form of church-government is such as God prescribed, it is adequate for all emergencies; if our church-courts are based upon the platform of the Bible, God requires from *them* the discharge of their peculiar duties, and not from *another*. He appointed *them* for this very purpose, and gave them no authority to shift the responsibility, the heat and burden of the day, upon creatures of their own. If the Church can delegate one part of her work, she can delegate another. Presbyteries might form Boards to receive, license, ordain, install and remove Ministers, and it would be as much done by the Church in her ecclesiastical capacity as the work of Missions and Education as now conducted. We can see no conceivable difference in principle between the right to settle Evangelists in foreign lands or to prescribe their fields of labour and the right to settle Pastors at home; and if the one can be entrusted to the care of a Board, the other may be also. But if, as it will perhaps be universally conceded, a Presbytery cannot delegate the power of receiving calls to any other body, no more can it renounce the equally important functions growing out of its relations to the Evangelists connected with it. The general introduction of the principle of delegating the power of ecclesiastical courts to any other body whatever would produce nothing but confusion, misrule and mischief; and a principle which cannot be carried out in all its legitimate applications, without an entire subversion of all the distinctive features of our ecclesiastical polity, is evidently foreign to our institutions and wholly un-Presbyterian: and yet upon this principle is founded the strange delusion that what we are doing by our *Boards* we are doing as a *Church*, in our "*appropriate character*," or in our "ecclesiastical capacity."

We are aware that it may be said that this reasoning proves too much—that it takes away from any ecclesiastical body the power to appoint Committees for digesting business or executing a particular trust as well as the power to

organize Boards. But the two cases are widely different. A Committee, even when acting in the name of the body that appoints it, acts by *particular direction;* the body first determines what is to be done, and the Committee is nothing but the instrument of execution. The planning, devising and deciding upon the matter are not in its hands. It possesses no discretion; it is like the tool in the hands of the carpenter, or a pen in the hands of a scribe. Power is not so much delegated to it as wielded through it by its original possessor. But in the case of Boards, the power is given into their hands; they consult, deliberate and act according to their own wisdom; they possess as truly a real jurisdiction as the Presbyteries themselves; and all this they have received as a *trust.* Here, then, for the purposes specified in their Constitution, the power passes from the body appointing them to the bodies appointed. The Boards are not the instruments by which the *Assembly acts* according to its views of duty and necessity, but they stand in the place of the *Assembly*, and wield *its* powers in their given fields of operation. The difference, then, between Executive Committees and Boards is just the difference between an instrument and an agent—between acting in a particular way and having another to act for you. In the one case the Church does act and in the other she surrenders her power of action; and it is against this delegation of the authority which she derived from her Head for specific purposes we feel ourselves bound most solemnly to protest, as fraught with nothing but mischief and disorder. We insist upon it, that the Church has no right to retire from the work of the Lord, and, folding her arms in dignity and ease, commission others to do for her what Christ commanded her to do for Him. Her instructions are not to see that the work is done, but to do it herself; and she is faithless to her Lord, to her high and solemn obligations and to a dying world, if she does not gird up her loins and buckle on her harness and give herself to active service in the field of the Lord of lords.

II. The argument from the Scriptures against the system of Boards is, of course, a very short one to all those who sincerely receive and adopt our Standards. If our model of church-government is according to the pattern revealed in the Mount, whatever is subversive of its fundamental principles must necessarily be unscriptural and destitute of all Divine authority. The great object of a visible church-organization or definite system of church-government is to put the Church in a situation, and provide her with all the necessary furniture of officers and means, for building up the kingdom of God and extending its conquests throughout the world. When our adorable Redeemer ascended up on high "He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." As under the Old Dispensation nothing connected with the worship or discipline of the Church of God was left to the wisdom or discretion of man, but everything was accurately prescribed by the authority of God, so, under the New, no voice is to be heard in the household of faith but the voice of the Son of God. The power of the Church is purely ministerial and declarative. She is only to hold forth the doctrine, enforce the laws, and execute the government which Christ has given her. She is to add nothing of her own to, and to subtract nothing from, what her Lord has established. Discretionary power she does not possess.

Christianity in its living principles and its outward forms is purely a matter of Divine revelation. The great error of the Church in all ages, the fruitful source of her apostasy and crime, has been a presumptuous reliance upon her own understanding. Her own inventions have seduced her from her loyalty to God, and filled her sanctuary with idols and the hearts of her children with vain imaginations. The Bible cuts at the very root of this evil by affording us a perfect and infallible rule of faith and practice. The absolute perfection of the Scriptures as a directory to man

was a cardinal principle of the Reformation, and whatever could not be traced to them either directly or by necessary inference was denounced as a human invention—as mere will-worship, which God abhors so deeply that an inspired Apostle has connected it with idolatry or the worshipping of angels.

Now the total silence of the Word of God in regard to such contrivances as Boards seals their condemnation. Nay, they are virtually prohibited by those plain directions of the Scriptures in regard to church-government which lead directly to a different system. But, however this may be, it certainly rests on those who maintain and uphold them to produce the warrant by which they have been formed. No system of measures so important in its results, so solemn in its bearings upon the kingdom of Christ, should be adopted by any denomination of Christians without the clear and unambiguous sanction of Him who alone is King upon the holy hill of Zion. To our minds it is clear that our Saviour constituted His Church with a special reference to Missionary operations, and we shall be slow to believe that the most successful method of conducting them was never discovered until eighteen centuries after His ascension.

The only plausible pretext by which a scriptural sanction can be pleaded for such institutions proceeds upon the supposition of a defect in the Constitution of the Church. It takes for granted that our regular ecclesiastical courts are inadequate for the work, and then, upon the general principle that where duties are clearly imposed the necessary means of compliance are implied, the Church bases the right of resorting to such inventions as shall enable her to obey the commandments of God. But before this reasoning can be allowed, the inadequacy of our ecclesiastical Constitution should be fully established; and then, instead of patching up its defects, our proper course would be to abolish our whole system, and to seek for one which would be adapted to our duties and responsibilities. The argument

would prove, not, that the Church possesses a purely legislative power, but, that in the first instance she had exercised her declarative power very badly, and had set forth a Constitution in the name of the Lord, which, in its fundamental defects, carried along with it a shocking impeachment of His wisdom. In other words, if Presbyterianism is a total failure, our proper plan is not to bolster a rotten system, but to re-examine the Word of God, correct our mistake, and adopt that plan, whatever it was, which in the hands of the Apostles was eminently successful.

There is another line of argument by which the unscriptural character of these Boards can be fully made out. The foundation on which the Church rests her authority for engaging in the work of Missions is the Saviour's command to preach the *Gospel* to every creature. It is obvious that whatever system of arrangements for accomplishing this purpose may be adopted, it should give the fullest security that the contributions of the Church go to support *nothing but the Gospel*. The people should know the character and sentiments of the Missionaries sustained by their liberality. Otherwise they are not complying with the Saviour's command. But what security do the Boards give? None but the endorsement of the Presbytery or Presbyteries that ordained the Evangelists. The Assembly has virtually declared this to be no security by requiring every Presbytery to examine Ministers from any other Presbytery coming within its bounds. We do not allow men to preach at home without a better security than we require from them, by the present system, when we send them abroad. We, therefore, leave our churches in fearful uncertainty as to what they are actually sending to heathen lands in the name of the Gospel.

It would be well for the Church if all her benevolent arrangements were as happily framed for the preservation of truth as they are for the raising and disbursing of money. To maintain, defend and propagate the *truth* is unquestionably her great business. Money is valuable only so far as

it can be rendered subservient to this high purpose; it should never be made the *end* of any system of ecclesiastical action. Nothing but a criminal indifference to the purity of the Gospel could ever have reconciled the Church to a plan of operations in which there was not afforded the strongest evidence which the nature of the case would admit, that the "Word of the truth of the Gospel," and that only, was encouraged at home and spread abroad into foreign lands. Those who contribute to our Boards do not know and cannot know whether they are sustaining Arminians, Semi-Pelagians or Presbyterians. They do not know, in other words, whether they are building up or pulling down the kingdom of the Redeemer—whether they are obeying a Divine command, or whether they are not. It is idle to say that we must have confidence in all our Presbyteries: the experience of the past teaches us too plainly that we should have no confidence in the flesh, and that Presbyteries are sometimes as mischievous as any other bodies. This difficulty would be obviated by carrying out the provisions of our Book. The Presbytery that sends a man *would know him;* the churches within its bounds would know him, and consequently would know what they are supporting. If the Presbytery that sends him should be unable to support him, it can call upon a neighbouring Presbytery, to which it is perfectly well known, for assistance; and that Presbytery would have full security from its position for the soundness of the man whom it is called on to assist. Such is the spirit of the provisions in the eighteenth chapter of our Form of Government. The funds thus raised could either be transmitted by mercantile agents of the Presbytery, or by a central Committee of the Assembly, consisting of business men charged only with *executive duties*, and not entrusted with discretionary power.

III. We pass now, in the last place, to consider those motives of expediency and necessity by which Boards and permanent Agencies have been commended by their friends, and even by the highest court of the Church itself. And

at the very outset of our remarks upon this head, we would utterly protest against the principle that expediency is any measure of duty or obligation in the Church of God. We acknowledge no law but the Divine will, and we acknowledge no successful method of ascertaining the will of God but His own written revelation, which we believe to be perfect and adapted as well as designed to furnish the man of God thoroughly for *every* good work. We can cordially adopt the language of the immortal Calvin when speaking of the Divine Word, for it is the language of truth and soberness: "Ab eo si deflectimus, ut nuper dixi, quamlibes strenua enitamur celeritate, quia tamen extra viam cursus erit, nunquam ad metam pertingere continget. Sic enim cogitandum est: fulgorem Divini vultus, quem et Apostolus inaccessum vocat, esse nobis instar inexplicabilis labyrinthi nisi Verbi linea in ipsum dirigamur: ut satius sit in hac via claudicare, quam extra eam celerrime currere."[1] The position that expediency is an adequate guide in any department of religious duty proceeds upon a principle having a much closer affinity to the atheistic philosophy of Epicurus, especially as developed in modern times, than to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Word of God uniformly represents man as blind and ignorant, incapable of seeing afar off, perverted in his judgment, warped in his understanding, seared in his conscience and misguided in his affections; and therefore requiring a heavenly teacher and a heavenly guide at every step of his progress. He has no light in himself in reference to Divine things. He is a child, a fool to be taught and led. Utterly unqualified by the narrowness of his faculties to foresee the future, he cannot tell even what is good for himself all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow, and much less can he determine upon a large scale what is expedient for the Church of God. Surrounded by his natural darkness, he has a light, most graciously bestowed, which penetrates its gloom—even the sure Word of prophecy—and to this he is

[1] Inst. I., vi., 3.

required to give heed. No more uncertain and fluctuating guide can be followed than calculations of expediency depending upon contingencies which no man can foresee, distorted by the conflicting interests of society, and shaped by the visionary impulses of imagination or the selfish purposes of pride and ambition. If the test of expediency can be introduced in one case, it may in another; and it would be impossible to set limits to the confusion and disorder growing out of the manifold inventions in which it would be found most fearfully prolific. To remove a single chink from the obstructions which bank up a mighty body of waters is to prepare the way for the desolations of a flood. The only safe principle is the noble principle of Chillingworth—the Bible, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants. When this great sun arises, all meaner lights retire as the stars disappear before the dawning day. If, then, Boards are unscriptural, Christians cannot entertain the question whether they are expedient or not; their doom is sealed. And here we might safely rest the matter. But as in some minds there is a mystic spell by which they are strangely tied to these inventions of the flesh, as Solomon himself was marvellously led away by the splendid idolatry of the groves, we shall endeavour to show, that even in the estimate of a carnal policy the ordinary pleas of expediency or necessity by which they are recommended are utterly worthless.

1. And, first, they are wholly unnecessary. All that they do is to diminish the sense of responsibility in the real agents by interposing a medium between them and the body to which they must account. The Executive Committees, in point of fact, do the business of the Boards; and it would certainly be wiser to connect them immediately with the Assembly, than to construct a circuitous route by which their transactions shall come to its knowledge.

Boards occupy the same position to our Church which voluntary societies occupy in relation to the Christian community in general. But the same necessity which led to the

formation of the latter does not exist to justify the continuance of the former. When the spirit of active benevolence and enlarged operation began to be aroused about the close of the last century, those who felt most warmly interested organized themselves into societies for the purpose of enlisting a more powerful and extended co-operation in their schemes of philanthropy and piety. Each member of these societies became a centre of influence in his own community —the warm and zealous advocate of its claims, through whose diligence and industry the slumbering energies of the Church were waked up, and the means acquired of successful and animating action. But it is very certain that the Boards are wholly unnecessary for this purpose among Presbyterians. If our churches are asleep, there is a shorter, simpler, safer method of breaking up their slumbers. Let the provisions of our Constitution be carried out in their true spirit, and we need no other centre of influence, no other advocate of philanthropy and duty in any community, than the faithful Pastors in our numerous and growing congregations.

Upon any view of the subject which we have been able to take, the Boards strike us as a mere encumbrance. If the present central plan of operations must be continued, abolish the larger body and make the smaller directly responsible to the Assembly. The larger body, the Board, is only in the way, a sort of shelter to the smaller—the Executive Committee—a wall between it and the General Assembly. As to any counsel and advice which the Boards might give, we presume that the wisdom of the Assembly is abundantly adequate to prescribe any directions to its Standing Committees which they might require or be disposed to ask.

2. The plea, that these institutions concentrate the energies and resources of the Church, that they diffuse information in regard to the necessities of a dying world and the efforts of the Church to relieve them, is to our minds exceedingly futile. If by the *energies* of the Church is meant its money, we think that this is very far from being a rec-

ommendation; but if its prayers and graces and zeal are intended, we cannot conceive how they are concentrated. We cannot understand how God's people are made to take a livelier interest in His work when carried on by foreign hands, than when conducted by institutions of His own appointment. The convenience of foreign transmissions is the only plausible pretext, and surely the Boards, as such, afford no sort of assistance in this matter. The diffusion of information through the whole Church would be as certain and as expeditious through the one channel as the other.

It has been said, and gravely said, that without some central organization our Evangelists, not knowing the efforts of the Church, might many of them be found together in the same field. In the first place, such ignorance would disgrace an educated gentleman, much more a Minister of the Gospel; and, in the second place, it assumes that these Missionaries seek their fields of labour without consulting the special guidance of the Holy Ghost. It is His province to allot men to their different stations as well as to crown their efforts with the desired success; and if at His call a thousand Evangelists should be found upon the same heathen shore, it would only be a token for good.

Our own impression is, that, on the score of diffusing religious intelligence among all classes of our church-members, a special organization is not so efficient as the regular action of our church-courts promises to be. If these benevolent operations were treated by the Presbyteries as a part of their ordinary ecclesiastical business, if the communications of their Ministers from abroad were read and discussed as the documents sent from the churches at home usually are, and the necessities of a dying world which they disclose made the subjects of special consideration and earnest prayer,—the effect upon the Church at large would be incalculably greater than under the existing arrangement in which these things pass in the solemn conclave of a chosen few, and are known no farther than the circulation of a meagre, monthly periodical can make them known.

3. But the great plea which is urged for these institutions is, that without them, in the present state of Christian feeling, nothing would be done: no one would put the shoulder to the wheel. If we understand the force of this plea, it recommends the Boards and a system of permanent Agencies as an excellent substitute for vital godliness in the churches. Surely, if our Ministers and congregations were what they should be, something would be done. They would count it all joy to engage in the work of the Lord according to His own appointment. If the spirit of love and zeal does not exist among us, it is vain to offer unto the Lord any other oblation. He will not accept a substitute for the heart. He will pour contempt upon our most splendid enterprises, and blast with the breath of His mouth our most imposing organizations. The Church, the whole Church—all the living members of the Redeemer's mystical body—must be awake and active in his service, each in his own particular province; and if our congregations are now asleep, our first step should be to peal the trumpet in their ears, to break their carnal slumbers, and to tell them, in the name of God, that the Master has need of them. Let us take and propose no substitutes for vital piety and active godliness. Substitutes will only increase and perpetuate the evil. But let us lay the axe at the root of the evil—begin reformation at the right point, and God will smile upon us and bless us. Let the provisions of our system be carried out and sustained in their true spirit by every Session, every Presbytery, every Synod, and the General Assembly; let a healthful circulation be diffused through all the veins of the Presbyterian body; let the spirit of primitive Christianity pervade and animate the whole mass; then will the righteousness of Zion go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth; then she will lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes and enlarge the borders of her tent; then she will feel herself fully equipped by her great Commander for all the battles of her glorious warfare, and in the joy and

strength of her revival it will be matter of astonishment and shame that she ever went down into Egypt for help, or called in the carnal principles of the world to fit her for her contests with the powers of darkness.

In conclusion, all that we ask is Presbyterianism, simple, pure, unadulterated Presbyterianism—the regular, uniform, healthful action of our noble system. We oppose no good work, but we cannot go out against the foe unless the Lord go with us, and we can have no reason to expect His assistance when we have trampled His institutions in the dust. When the law goes forth, it must go forth from Zion; and because we have told her towers, and marked her bulwarks, and considered her palaces, and have been fully assured that she is the city of the Lord of hosts, the city of our God,—we are resolved neither to rest nor to hold our peace till out of Zion shall go forth the law and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

THE ARGUMENT
FOR CHURCH-BOARDS ANSWERED.

I AM glad that a Review of the Argument against Boards[1] has given me the opportunity of appearing again in defence of the venerable Standards of the Presbyterian Church. Fully persuaded as I am that those Standards contain the "mind of the Spirit" upon the nature, extent and proper distribution of ecclesiastical power, and just as strongly assured that the system of action to which our Church, in an evil hour, has lent the sanction of her name and authority is subversive of her peculiar and characteristic principles of government and order, I must feel anxious to bring her back, so far as my efforts can be of any service, to her ancient platform, and to arrest the progress of those abuses which, in a general decline of all true religion, had silently and imperceptibly crept in among us. The cause of Missions will suffer nothing from a discussion conducted in the fear of God, and prompted by a single desire to glorify His name. Light is the friend of righteousness; and we never can expect the people of God to engage in any spiritual enterprise with interest and prayer unless its principles are addressed to their *faith*. It is by *faith* that kingdoms are to be subdued and righteousness wrought, the mouths of lions stopped, the violence of fire quenched, and the edge of the sword escaped. By *faith* alone can the weak be made strong, and the timid wax valiant in fight; and if ever the empire of darkness is to be overthrown and the armies of the aliens put to flight in this rebellious province of God's dominions, the sacra-

[1] See Appendix A of this volume.

mental host of the elect must go forth strong *in faith*, wielding no other weapons than those which their Leader has commanded or approved. The great defect, as it strikes me, of all the missionary schemes of the day is, that the principles upon which they rely for success, their leading measures, the general plan upon which they are conducted, are addressed to the natural sympathies of men and not to the *faith* of the saints of the Most High. They are constructed in such a way as to conciliate public opinion in their favour, and the great instrument of their success is the popularity of their measures, leading to liberal and handsome contributions. Take away from them the approbation and the money of the world, and they wither and die instantaneously. They have no principle of life in themselves. Unlike the ordinances of God which thrive by opposition and flourish amid reproach, these sickly creatures of human benevolence and folly can accomplish nothing without the treasures of Egypt at their feet; and will attempt nothing until the great men and mighty men of the earth are duly consulted, flattered and cajoled. I will not say that, like the Jesuits of Rome, they become all things to all men for a valuable consideration; but I will say that if they were more spiritual they would have fewer friends among the enemies of God, if they were more scriptural they would be less vain-glorious, and if they were less crafty they would probably be much more successful. Addressed to perishing and fleeting passions, they rise and fall, ebb and flow, with the tide of popular favour and mercantile success. When their treasuries are empty the merchants of the earth have made "bad speculations," the commercial embarrassments "are distressing," and "the pecuniary affairs of the country" are involved in dreadful perplexity. There was a time when Herod and Pontius Pilate, the rulers and the people of the earth, could league in malice against the Lord and His Anointed, and yet His throne be set upon the holy hill of Zion in defiance of all their opposition. There was a time when the rise and fall,

the prosperity and decay, of the kingdoms of this world were alike conducive to the advancement and success of that kingdom which the God of heaven had established in the midst of the earth. There was a time when the Church of God could grow and flourish and spread her conquests far and wide in the midst of scorn, persecution and reproach, and when she expected nothing from the world but its malice, and asked for nothing but to be patiently heard. Those golden days have either passed away, or those institutions which live only in the breath of the public approbation are radically wrong. Those were days of *faith.* Men did *what* they were commanded and *as* they were commanded, and then rested upon the sure Word of promise which was better than the favour of kings, the applause of subjects, or thousands of gold and silver. If we would be alike prosperous and alike independent of the fluctuations and vicissitudes of this world's interests, we must return to the *simplicity of faith;* and as no institutions can address themselves to the faith of God's people but those which are founded upon God's Word—for the Word is the measure and the standard of faith—we must abandon all the expedients of human wisdom, which, in scriptural matters, ever has been and ever will be *folly;* we must despise the elements of carnal policy, which, however conducive to success in the affairs of this world, brings nothing but disgrace and defeat in the affairs of the Church; and we must confine ourselves simply to what God has sanctioned, and rely for success upon His promises; and just as far as His favour transcends in importance the applause of men, and His Spirit excels in efficacy the co-operation of mortals, so far may we hope that the success of scriptural measures will exceed the success of our present contrivances. Whatever is addressed to faith can be made the matter of wrestling prayer, and brought home upon the conscience with the sanctions of duty. While discussion will inevitably prove fatal to every plant which our heavenly Father hath not planted, and shiver into atoms many a fair fabric of

unhallowed zeal and will-worship, the simple appointments of God will commend themselves with additional force to the hearts of His people, and accomplish all their ancient achievements in the hand of His Spirit. Who shall say that discussion is not the very means by which God, in our day, is shaking the heavens and the earth in order that the things which are made, the devices and expedients of man, may be shaken and removed, and that those things which cannot be shaken, which rest upon the firm and solid foundation of His own Word, may remain? I feel well assured that nothing is more dangerous than a blind zeal, and that, consequently, discussion must be valuable in disseminating light and knowledge as to the principles and plans of our benevolent operations. If they are found to be wrong, we know that the cause of God will suffer nothing, but gain much, from the total destruction of every Board connected with the Church; if they are found to be right, we can support them with a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.

Believing that a full, thorough and candid discussion of this whole subject will be eminently subservient to the prosperity of Missions, both at home and abroad, by purifying the zeal of the Church, and enlisting more generally the affections, prayers and co-operation of all her true members, I embark in it with cheerfulness, trusting that the Lord may overrule my poor lucubrations to His own glory and His people's good. It is the welfare of Zion that I seek; but I cannot consistently pray, "Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces," without exerting every nerve and making every lawful effort to dispossess the strangers that are defiling the sanctuary and defacing the carved work of the city of our God. The Review before me furnishes an opportunity of presenting the principles for which I contend in immediate contrast with those upon which the Boards are founded. Let me invite my brethren to compare them carefully and make up their minds in the fear of God. If they have hitherto sustained the Boards as a mat-

ter of course, and taken it for granted that they were right without subjecting them to a severe investigation, let me beg them to remember that as he only is a sound philosopher who begins his inquiries in doubt in order to end them in conviction, so he only is a consistent Christian who forbears to believe until he is convinced that the Lord hath spoken. He who believes when he ought to doubt is liable to doubt when he ought to believe. He who begins in blind credulity may possibly end in absolute skepticism. When he finds principles which he had regarded as certain, merely because he had never examined them, gradually giving way beneath him, he is in danger of drawing the hasty conclusion that nothing is fixed, and that all truth is mere delusion. There is great danger, therefore, in taking things for granted; and hence I would urge my brethren to read this discussion with that cautious suspense of judgment which is indispensably required in the search after truth, and which is equally removed from partiality to any set of opinions on the one hand, and from indolence of understanding on the other. Let them be indifferent as to *what* may prove to be true, but earnest and fixed when the truth has been discovered. If this discussion should be conducted and received in this spirit, those who commenced it will never be reproached as troublers of Israel.

In replying to the Reviewer, I shall notice his defence of the Boards, and take up his objections to the Argument against Boards, in such order as the train of my own thoughts may suggest.

The Reviewer begins his article with a proposition, which, however just in theory, can never be of any practical importance in the search after truth; because it can never be applied till the truth is known. Like Aristotle's definition of virtue, it supposes you already in possession of what you profess to be seeking. No doubt the "middle path between latitudinarianism on the one hand and ultraism on the other" is always the safe one, but the difficulty lies in determining these extremes. The Reviewer, I apprehend, is a

master of rhetoric, and employs his whole introduction in illustrating this truism, with the obvious design of fastening upon those who are opposed to his views the unmeaning charge of *ultraism*—a charge which must always be unmeaning until the extremes are accurately defined, and the middle path clearly pointed out. Still words are the coin of fools, and he who appeals to a silly prejudice founded upon a name may succeed with multitudes in throwing odium upon principles which he finds himself unable to refute. The Reviewer is fond of drawing illustrations from the Church of Scotland. Does he know what class of her sons is called *Moderates*, and with what propriety the epithet is applied? And is it beyond the compass of possibility that those among us, who, like the Reviewer, are glorying in their *moderation*, may be doing no more for the glory of God and the purity of His institutions than their namesakes across the water? If, in fact, there *appears* to be as striking a coincidence in principle as there is in name between them—each labouring to put the inventions of man above the appointments of God, and virtually denying the undivided authority of Christ as King and Head of the Church—I hope it is only an appearance. But, after all, what is my ultraism? If I understand the Reviewer, latitudinarianism, so far as the present subject is concerned, consists in upholding voluntary associations, ultraism is maintaining that the Church of Jesus Christ is the true instrument of converting the world, while the middle path of *safety* and of *truth* is to be found in supporting ecclesiastical corporations. Now, for aught that I can see to the contrary, it is just as safe to make voluntary associations the extreme of latitudinarianism, ecclesiastical corporations the extreme of ultraism, and the Church of God, as organized by her glorious Head, the true middle between them. I have noticed this sly and artful introduction, because with many minds it may have the force of a negative argument. The question of voluntary associations is settled among us: to assert, therefore, that the opponents of Boards

are just on the opposite extreme will produce in some the calm and settled conviction that the friends of Boards are just what they ought to be. Their neighbours are all wrong, and as they are not like them, therefore they must be right. Many a conclusion has been obstinately supported by no better reasoning than this.

The considerations which the Reviewer formally proposes as arguments are of two kinds—positive and negative; and these again are direct and indirect. I shall answer them in the order in which they have been proposed.

1. First, then, he asserts that there is a presumption in favour of the Boards from the fact that they are established institutions, and that my principles are new and singular. This may be so, but let it be remembered that a presumption of the same kind existed against Christianity, when its doctrines were first promulgated, and against the Reformation of Luther, when he first commenced to testify against the iniquities of Rome. The only effect of such a presumption is to throw the burden of proof upon those who assail existing institutions. Whatever positive force it possesses depends upon the probability that whatever is settled must be right, or that institutions sanctioned by prescription must necessarily be founded in reason. It is an argument which may be pleaded just as strongly in defence of abuses as in behalf of righteousness, and, therefore, as an argument, it is absolutely worthless. Granting, then, that the presumption exists, it *proves* nothing, but only throws upon me the necessity of proving my point; but, in fact, no such presumption exists: the *onus probandi* rests upon the Reviewer himself and those who espouse his principles. The Argument against Boards insisted upon abiding by the Standards of the Church; and those who believe that the plans which every Presbyterian Minister has solemnly sanctioned are ineffectual and weak are bound to show the defects of our system. The presumption is, that our Standards are right until they are shown to be wrong. The true innovators are those who have grafted another system upon our ancient and ven-

erable platform. The Reviewer, throughout, labours under the singular mistake, that in the Argument against Boards a scheme was proposed separate and distinct from the provisions of our Book. A leading object of that article was to deny the right of devising schemes at all, and to confine the Church within the limits of Divine prescription. It takes for granted that the plan developed in our Standards is agreeable to the Word of God, and labours to bring back the churches to a cordial adoption of its principles. If, then, the real question at issue is, Shall we adopt the method of our Book, or shall we devise another of our own? the presumption unquestionably lies against those who depart from the Book. They must prove that Boards are scriptural, or acknowledge that they do not commend themselves to the faith and prayers of God's people. When they bring their strange inventions into the Church of God, and require their brethren to sustain their contrivances, we have a right to ask them by what authority they do these things; and if they can produce no sanction of their measures from the Word of God or the Standards of the Church—the bond of our ecclesiastical connection—we have a right to complain of them as innovators and troublers. They bound themselves by covenant to one plan, and, behold, they have introduced another. Hence, I can triumphantly retort the presumption upon the Reviewer himself. It is with pain, however, that I add—for I was astounded at his declaration upon the subject—that neither the Scriptures nor our Standards are decisive authority with him. The presumption in favour of Boards is so very strong, in his view, that neither the doctrine of the Bible nor the principles of Presbyterianism, however plainly opposed to them, should detract from their authority. Listen to his own words (the italics are my own): "They," that is, the opponents of Boards, "must establish against this system," the system of Boards, "a charge of unscripturality and dangerous opposition to our Standards and to our Creed. *Nor is this all.* These objectors admit with us the absolute neces-

sity of accomplishing that work which these Boards and Agencies are designed to perform. They acknowledge as fully as we do the necessity of the end. Our only difference is as to the means by which that end may be best secured. The means we propose are those already in operation. These means have been sanctioned by adoption, by long trial, and, as is believed, by eminent success. Now it is incumbent on these brethren to show not merely that this means is liable to objection and abuse; or that it has been actually abused in time past. They must make it evident that it necessarily leads to such evils, and that these evils are inseparable from it. They must further provide a system of means by which the end, which as they allow must be attained, can be accomplished. This system of theirs they must show is free from all similar difficulties and objections, is not liable to similar abuses, and is in itself scriptural, Presbyterial and expedient. All this our objectors are under obligations to do before they can fairly call upon us to abandon the existing system and to endanger an end of such necessary and transcendent importance."[1] It seems, then, that even if the Boards should be proved to be unscriptural, and in dangerous opposition to the Standards of the Church, their friends cannot be called on to abandon them until a better system is actually provided. No matter if God forbids them, we are bound to uphold them until it can be shown that the scriptural plan is really the best. And what are those mighty arguments in favour of the Boards, which can silence the voice of God and annul our covenanted engagements as members of the Presbyterian Church? Why, they have "been sanctioned by *adoption*, by long trial, and, as is believed, by eminent success." These weighty considerations, which can be pleaded in defence of every abuse under heaven, which apply just as strongly to the Propaganda at Rome, the Inquisition in Spain, and the infernal butcheries of Mohammed as they do to the Boards of the Presbyterian Church, are gravely

[1] Balt. Lit. and Rel. Mag. for 1841, pp. 459, 460, and Appendix A to this volume, p. 584.

brought forward to drown the voice of inspiration, and to silence the clamours of those who are zealous for the Lord God of hosts. Oh, tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon! I trust, however, that there are still those who will abandon the Boards if they are proved to be unscriptural and in "dangerous opposition to our Standards and our Creed;" and who will require no stronger argument in favour of a "more excellent way" than that it is both scriptural and Presbyterian—being fully assured that whatever plan God has prescribed He will certainly bless. For such I write; for such even the Reviewer has written, as he has entered into an elaborate argument to show that the Boards are scriptural; although, according to his own principles, it was a matter of no sort of consequence whether God approved them or not, seeing that they have been sanctioned by "adoption, by long trial and by eminent success."

2. Passing by the negative argument of the Reviewer, which will be sufficiently considered in another part of this discussion, I proceed to notice the principle upon which he lays out his strength, and which he felt to be of vital importance to the system which he has undertaken to defend. If I can show that this principle is false, unsupported by Scripture and condemned by our Creed, my task will be done, and every additional argument that I may choose to advance will be *ex abundanti*—over and above what can strictly be required of me. This principle is, that the Church, to a certain extent, is the confidential agent of her Divine Head, invested with discretionary powers, and left to the resources of her own wisdom. Two parts of the review are devoted to the discussion of this gratuitous dogma—one attempting to show that it is recognized in our Standards, and the other that it is sanctioned by the Word of God. The method of proof in each case is substantially the same. The Reviewer lays it down as an axiom, that where duties are required the necessary powers to discharge them are conveyed, if not directly, at least by

implication. Now it is admitted, on all hands, that the Gospel must be preached to every creature. It is assumed by the Reviewer, that God has made no provisions in His Word for sending out the heralds of salvation to the waste places of the earth; but as He requires that this should be done, and done by the Church, He has tacitly committed to her the full power of making such arrangements as to her, in her wisdom, may seem most meet. She is His agent, His minister of state, His prime adviser, authorized to act in His name and to do anything and everything not positively prohibited that may promise to subserve the end to be accomplished. Speaking of the Church the Reviewer says: "She is now under a dispensation of principles and not of rules. The Church has passed from a state of pupilage to the age of maturity. God now speaks to her as to a full-grown, reasonable person. He has given to her general laws and great fundamental principles. He has enjoined upon her certain great and glorious duties. By those laws she is to be restrained and guided in the exercise of her own wisdom in devising the ways and means for the accomplishment of the greatest good in the best possible manner." Again: "That which the Church is required to do she is empowered to do by all means not expressly forbidden or implicitly countermanded." The principle maintained in the Argument against Boards, that the Word of God is a perfect rule of practice as well as of faith, and that the Church has no right to add to it or to take from it, is pronounced to be Judaical and inconsistent with the glorious liberty secured by the Son of God.[1] We must make a passing remark on the expressions employed, because they are *ad captandum*. We are, then, distinctly to understand that subjection to the will of God is bondage, and that Jesus Christ has purchased for His people the glorious privilege of walking in the light of their own eyes! It is certainly a new idea that the servitude of the Jews con-

[1] Spirit of the Nineteenth Century for 1842, pp. 27, 28. See Appendix A to this volume, pp. 603–605.

sisted in the fact that they were guided by the Lord in all their ways, and that they were at liberty to do nothing of a religious nature without Divine direction. I had supposed that their bondage consisted in the *burdensome* nature of their ritual, and that true Christian liberty, so far as the Levitical economy is concerned, implies an exemption not from Divine direction but from these particular services. The Christian is free, not because his dispensation leaves him to himself, but because God has not enjoined upon him the same laborious duties which he exacted from His ancient people. Still, what is his duty is just as much enjoined, just as strictly commanded, as the cumbrous sacrifices and painful ceremonies of the Jews. If it is Jewish bondage to be guided in all things by the wisdom of God, and Christian liberty to be left to the suggestions of our own wisdom under certain general limitations and restraints, I should say, by all means give me the bondage of the Jew rather than the freedom of the Christian. But the Church, it seems, is "now under a dispensation of principles and not of rules." Had it not been for the subsequent illustration I should have found it impossible to catch the idea which the Author here intends to convey, and even with the aid of his simile I am not sure that I apprehend his meaning. What is the distinction between *rules* of action and *principles* of action? Does a moral principle differ from a moral rule in anything else but the form? A rule is a law prescribed by adequate authority. A principle is anything proved, acknowledged or assumed to be true. The truth of the principle is the foundation of the law. The principle, therefore, necessarily contains the rule, and the rule just as necessarily supposes the principle. If you make the principle more and the rule less general, the general must include the particulars; so that I do not see how it is possible to be under a government of principles without being under a government of rules. The principle states the general truth out of which the rules of conduct or particular duties arise, and therefore obviously includes them.

They are so intimately connected, that in moral subjects—matters of practical obedience—the terms may safely be used as synonymous. You may say it is a principle that truth ought to be spoken; you may say it is a rule, also, or law. That foolish talking and jesting are not convenient, you may regard as a principle; the proposition obviously contains a rule. There is a distinction, acknowledged by philosophers, between principles and rules; but it is a distinction which has no conceivable connection with this subject. When we inquire *why* truth, justice and benevolence are obligatory, or attempt to investigate the foundations of moral obligation, we are said to investigate the principles of morals; but when we lay down *what things* are right and binding, we may be said to prescribe the rules of morals. Now the Reviewer cannot mean that God has told us in His Word *why* righteousness and truth are to be sought and cultivated, and left it to ourselves to determine *what things* are just, lovely or of good report. The Bible confessedly contains a perfect code of moral rules; the law of the Lord is perfect. What, then, is the distinction between a government of principles and rules? I presume that the Author means by *principles* the ends to be attained, and by *rules* the means of attaining them; and then the proposition will amount to this—that God has told us what to do, but not how it is to be done. In other words, he means that the Church is invested with discretionary powers, restrained only by the positive prohibitions of the Divine Word—that is, what, from the form of its enunciation, was evidently intended to be passed off as an argument turns out to be a repetition, in almost an unintelligible shape, of the very thing to be proved, a mere *petitio principii*. This principle, thus variously stated, is the hinge of the Reviewer's whole argument. A principle so important one would think would have been fully and indisputably proved, and yet it is a singular fact that not a solitary direct argument is adduced in its support. There is an appeal to the authority of Calvin, but the passages quoted have no

bearing upon the subject at all; they might as well have been adduced to prove that there are inhabitants in the moon. A passage from Owen is quoted in a foot-note, but it is directly against the Reviewer. The Confession of Faith is also quoted, but the passages unfortunately refer to a very different point. His indirect argument, which is everything in the shape of reasoning that I can find in his last two articles, amounts to this: God has required of the Church certain duties, without furnishing her with the means of performing them; upon the principle that where duties are commanded the necessary power is conveyed, she is at liberty to devise the means for herself. The whole force of this reasoning depends upon the proposition, that God has not furnished the Church with the proper apparatus of means for doing all that He has required. In other words, the real point at issue between the Reviewer and myself is, whether the Church as organized by Jesus Christ and His Apostles is *competent* to do all that her Head has enjoined upon her, or does she require additional Agents to assist her? This is the real question: Did Christ give the Church all the furniture she needed, or did He partially supply her, with a general direction to make up the deficiency? Upon this question I fearlessly join issue. So strong are my convictions of the adequacy of the Church as organized in the Scriptures to meet all exigencies, that, if it can be clearly shown that she is incompetent to discharge any office assumed to be imperative upon her, I should think it much more probable that the duty was not enjoined, than that the Church was thus relatively imperfect. What she clearly cannot do is not commanded. The Reviewer has evidently confounded—and it is the source of all his error on this subject—the acknowledged Protestant principle, that "there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be

observed,"[1] with the general doctrine—universally condemned among all true Protestants—of discretionary power. Had he attended to the proper distinction upon this subject which is so clearly drawn by Calvin, and so unanswerably established by Owen, he might have spared himself the trouble of appealing to these illustrious men in behalf of his extravagant views of ecclesiastical power. They *do* sanction the doctrine of our Confession—a doctrine which was fully admitted in the Argument against Boards, but a doctrine which by no means covers the principle on which ecclesiastical corporations are founded. I shall let Calvin speak for himself. "We have," says he, "an excellent and most certain mark, therefore, which distinguishes those impious constitutions by which it has been stated that true religion is obscured and men's consciences subverted, and the legitimate regulations of the Church, which are always directed to one of these two ends, or to both together, viz., that in the holy assembly of the faithful all things may be conducted with suitable decorum and dignity, and that the community may be kept in order by the firm bonds of courtesy and moderation."[2] Subsequently he remarks: "We do not place order in those nugatory pomps which have nothing but a vain appearance of splendour, but in that well-regulated polity which excludes all confusion, incivility, obstinacy, clamours and dissensions. Of the first kind examples are furnished by Paul—as that profane banquets should not be connected with the sacred Supper of the Lord; that women should not appear in public without being veiled, and many others in common use among us—such as that we pray with bended knees and with our heads uncovered; that we administer the sacraments of the Lord, not in a slovenly manner, but with due decorum; that we observe some decent order in the burial of the dead; and other things of a similar nature. Of the second sort are the hours appointed for public prayers, sermons and sacraments;

[1] Confession of Faith, ch. i., sec. 6.

[2] Institutes, book iv., ch. x., sec. 28.

quietness and silence under sermons; the singing of hymns; the places appointed for these services, and the days fixed for the celebration of the Lord's Supper; the prohibition of Paul, that women should not teach in the Church, and the like; but especially the regulations for the preservation of discipline, as catechising, ecclesiastical censures, excommunications, fasting and everything else that can be referred to the same class. Thus all the constitutions of the Church which we receive as holy and useful may be classed under two heads; some refer to rites and ceremonies, others to discipline and peace."[1] A little further on he adds: "I approve of no human constitutions except such as are founded on the authority of God and deduced from the Scripture, so that they may be considered as altogether Divine."[2] The reader is here requested to mark the difference between Calvin and the Reviewer: Calvin approves of *no* human constitution which is not founded on the *authority of God and deduced from Scripture;* the Reviewer approves of *any* human constitution *founded in expediency* and *not condemned* by the Word of God. The passages already extracted—to which many others of similar import might easily be added—show conclusively that the only discretion which Calvin allows to the Church is precisely that accorded by our Confession of Faith, and respects "some circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the Church common to human actions and societies." The question concerning Boards is not a question of order and decorum. It is a question concerning a positive institution, which is itself to exercise this very discretion in regard to decency—a question concerning a grave and important addition to the government of the Church, and not about "some circumstances common to human actions and societies." Those "specific regulations" of our Book, which the Reviewer endeavours to trace to the same principle on which he defends the Boards,[3] are mere matters of arrangement,

[1] Institutes, book iv., ch. x., sec. 29. [2] Ibid., sec. 30.

[3] Spirit of the Nineteenth Century for 1842, p. 28. See Appendix A, p. 605.

coming obviously under the doctrine of Calvin, and of a much greater than Calvin, who has solemnly enjoined by the Spirit of inspiration that "all things be done decently and in order." The essential difference between those "circumstances common to human actions and societies" which may be regulated by the "light of nature and Christian prudence according to the general rules of the Word," and those additions to the worship of God and government of the Church which all true Protestants have united in condemning, is thus clearly stated by Owen in his "Discourse concerning Liturgies"—a discourse which, *mutatis mutandis*, may just as conclusively be applied to Boards:[1] "Circumstances are either such as follow actions *as actions*, or such as are arbitrarily superadded and adjoined by command unto actions, which do not of their own accord, nor naturally, nor necessarily attend them. Now religious actions in the worship of God are actions still. Their religious relation doth not destroy their natural being. Those circumstances, then, which do attend such actions *as actions*, not determined by Divine institution, may be ordered, disposed of and regulated by the prudence of men. For instance, prayer is a part of God's worship; public prayer is so as appointed by Him. This, as it is an action to be performed by man, cannot be done without the assignment of time and place, and sundry other things, if order and conveniency be attended to. These are circumstances that attend all actions of that nature to be performed by a community, whether they relate to the worship of God or no. These men may, according as they see good, regulate and change, as there is occasion. . . . There are also some things which some men call *circumstances* also, that no way belong of themselves to the actions whereof they are said to be the circumstances, nor do attend them, but are imposed on them or annexed unto them, by the arbitrary authority of those who take upon them to give order and rules in such cases. These are not circumstances attending

[1] Works, vol. xix., p. 437.

the nature of the thing itself, but are arbitrarily superadded to the things that they are appointed to accompany. Whatever men may call such additions, they are no less parts of the whole, wherein they serve, than the things themselves whereunto they are adjoined." Circumstances of this sort, to which Owen indeed denies the name, are, according to him, unequivocally condemned in the Word of God. He maintains the principle—and what Presbyterian or Protestant can feel himself at liberty to deny it?—"that whatever is added is contrary to what is commanded, though not in this or that particular command, yet to that command that nothing be added."[1] To bring Boards or ecclesiastical corporations within the principle admitted by Owen, the Reviewer must show that they are circumstances necessarily attending the actions of ordaining ministers and sending them out to preach the Gospel to every creature, considered merely *as actions;* and unless he can establish this point, the noble discourse of Owen bears just as hardly upon his favourite Boards as it does upon human liturgies. It fully coincides with the opinion expressed in the Argument against Boards, that the *silence* of the Word of God concerning these inventions seals their condemnation. When the Reviewer shall have proved that ecclesiastical corporations are mere "*circumstances*, concerning the worship of God and government of the Church, *common to human actions and societies*," he may conscientiously sustain and support them without deserting Presbyterian principles for the extravagant pretensions of Churchmen, Prelatists and Papists. Let the Reviewer consider carefully Owen's definition of *circumstances*, and his account of the real extent of discretionary power in ecclesiastical matters, and he will surely be constrained to acknowledge that he understood neither what he said nor whereof he affirmed when he wrote, at random, about a "dispensation of principles and not of rules." My faith in the Divine authority of our Presbyterian forms is quite too strong to allow me, for

[1] Works, vol. xix., p. 444.

a moment, to suppose that a rejection of the Reviewer's preposterous dogma "would lay the axe to many a fair branch of our ecclesiastical polity, and leave a bare and barren trunk behind it; that it would tie up the hands and feet of our sacred polity, and deprive it of all power of motion; or that it would emasculate it of all its strength and vigour, and reduce it to a helpless and exanimate system."[1] On the contrary, I sincerely believe that the following remarks by an able reviewer of the Tracts for the Times and other kindred publications, with the exception of the historical allusions, apply just as forcibly to the Presbyterian Church in these United States as to the Church of Scotland: "It is not our smallest cause of gratitude to God as a Church, that He has left us nothing to wish for or condemn in the constitution of our Church, as laid at the reformation. All that is necessary is, that we fill up the outline which was then drawn, that we build upon the foundation which was then laid, that we carry out the principles which were then brought fresh and immediately from the Word of God. We need invent nothing, displace nothing, alter nothing. Our reformed Church was perfect in the economy of her creed, constitution, discipline and ritual. All we require is not to select among the institutions of modern innovators, or the antiquated relics of the Middle Ages: we have but to return to the condition in which our own Church existed at the period of the first and second Reformations, to find realized as pure and as perfect a transcript of the apostolic Church as can exist among uninspired men. This is an advantage which no other Church can lay claim to. And, accordingly, whenever a revival happens to other communions, they are led in consequence to depart from the principles and arrangements of their constitutions, while the more profound and powerful the revival we experience, it brings us back but with the greater force to a more perfect conformity to our own glorious con-

[1] Spirit of the Nineteenth Century for 1842, p. 27. See Appendix A, p. 604.

stitution. We fear we are not sensible of this our exclusive privilege, nor sufficiently thankful for it."[1]

Having now, as I conceive, clearly detected and exposed the singular confusion of ideas which led the Reviewer, with great parade of argument and corresponding hope of success, to quote both Calvin and the Confession of Faith in support of a principle which they both equally condemn, I proceed to the real question at issue: Is the Church adequately organized to discharge all the duties which Christ, her glorious Head and King, demands at her hands; or is she at liberty to supply the defects of her Constitution from the resources of her own wisdom? In other words, Is the Church simply a servant of Christ, bound to do what she is commanded, and as she is commanded, acting in all respects according to orders; or is she a confidential agent, instructed only as to the ends to be accomplished, and left to invent the means for herself? The Reviewer and myself differ, and differ fundamentally, as to the true relation in which the Church stands to Christ. According to my views, the Church is commissioned to teach men to observe all things whatsoever which Christ has commanded. According to the Reviewer, she must add to the commandments of God those wise expedients of her own without which the commandments of God would be of none effect. It is true that, according to his own confession, these inventions of the Church do not exactly bind the conscience;[2] but then the commandments of God do, and these commandments cannot be kept without these inventions: so that a man, after all, is left to the alternative of sinning against God, or of observing the ordinances which the Church has instituted. This may not be binding the conscience, but it would seem to require a sagacity equal to his who could "divide a hair 'twixt south and south-west side" to discriminate between being actually bound to do a thing, or being under the inevitable necessity of sinning—that is, of violating obligation—by not doing it.

[1] Presbyterian Review (Edin.), No. lv., p. 619, *note*.

[2] Spirit of the Nineteenth Century for 1842, p. 31. See App. A, p. 606.

The Reviewer is very acute—he can distinguish between a government of principles and a government of rules, and no doubt can resolve the difficulty in the case before us.

I might expose the fallacy of his principle by appealing to the great Protestant doctrine, that the Scriptures are a sufficient and complete rule of faith, and that through their instructions the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto *every* good work.[1] I might appeal to the equally acknowledged truth, that all the power of the Church is ministerial and declarative, and that she has no right to make laws, establish constitutions, or institute ordinances without the authority and sanction of the written Word.[2] I might show that the discretionary power demanded by the Reviewer, and actually exercised in the organization of ecclesiastical Boards, interferes with the royal prerogatives of Christ and the executive functions of the Holy Spirit. On all these grounds he might be met and triumphantly refuted. It might be shown that he is at war with the whole spirit of Protestantism, and is undesignedly making common cause with the friends of priestly intolerance and the foes of religious liberty throughout the world. But my present purpose will be best subserved by omitting all considerations of this sort, and showing at once that the Church *is* adequate to do, through her Divine organization, all that in the Scriptures is enjoined on her. In this way the only earthly pretext for ecclesiastical corporations will be removed, and the last lingering tie that binds the hearts of our people to these idols of men will be severed—I hope—for ever. As the work of Foreign Missions is confessedly the most difficult enterprise with which the Church is entrusted, if it can be shown that she is perfectly competent to conduct this department of labour without foreign assistance, extraneous agencies will hardly be demanded for any other part of her duty. Now what is required that our church-courts are not qualified to do, in order that the Gospel may be sent to "every creature under heaven"? There is a pre-

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

[2] Form of Government, chap. i., sec. 7.

liminary office which the Holy Spirit must discharge before the Gospel can be preached either at home or abroad. Men must be called into the ministry, and qualified by a special unction from on high as well as by the subordinate teaching of man for its solemn and responsible duties. When men give satisfactory evidence to the Church that they are called of God and duly prepared to preach the glorious Gospel, this fact is declared by the imposition of hands, which the Presbytery alone can do. We have now the Preachers. The next business is to send them, that is, to support them by supplying their daily wants in their respective fields of labour. The money must be raised in the separate congregations; and the Scriptures have appointed a set of officers who are ordained for the very purpose of attending to the secular affairs of the Church. When you have raised the money, the next step is to *send it* to the Preachers, which, with the commercial facilities afforded by the present condition of the civilized world, can surely be no hard matter. The Holy Spirit, then, supplies us with Preachers, the Presbytery ordains them, and the Deacons of the church support them. What more is required? In what respects is this arrangement defective or inadequate? The character, qualifications and control of the Minister belong, of right, to the Presbytery, and when they send him out, they are furnished in every congregation with the necessary organization for supplying his wants. This is a plain and simple matter, and evidently requires none of the cumbrous and circuitous arrangements which characterize the Boards. The Presbyteries are courts acknowledged by our Constitution; Deacons are officers recognized in every particular congregation, and capable of being employed in the service of the Presbyteries and the higher tribunals of the Church. If one Presbytery should be too feeble to support its Missionaries, provision is made in our Book for its obtaining assistance from neighbouring Presbyteries. This is certainly the plan, and the only plan, contemplated by the framers of our Form of Government. Yet our Reviewer, though he has solemnly re-

ceived it as "agreeable to the Word of God," has pronounced it to be preposterous and utterly inadequate to meet the wants of a dying world. The pith of his whole argument—if argument that may be called which arrives at a conclusion without any premises at all—is contained in the following extract: "The world is given to our Church, in common with others, as a field to be cultivated for the Lord of the harvest. The heathen world is, according to our ability, to be provided with the preaching of the Gospel and all other things necessary to its full success. The present wants of our own country, also, are to be met by a continually increasing supply of good and faithful ministers. These claims require for their fulfilment the education of candidates for the sacred office, and the sending forth and sustaining them when ready to enter upon their various fields of labour. For the accomplishment of this work, which is of such evident greatness, the co-operation and assistance of every church is required to supply the men and the means; and in addition to this, some agency by which these men and this means may be disposed of to the best advantage, and by which all the operations involved in carrying out such a plan may be conducted under the most watchful responsibility and with the greatest possible economy. Let any one consider, for a moment, the details implied in the prosecution of this entire work; the extent of the field to be overlooked and accurately surveyed; the number of the Ministers to be sent forth; the number of candidates to be brought forward; the incalculable difficulties connected with their preparation; the sending forth, the locating and the supervision of these labourers in the vineyard; the indisposition of our churches to exercise liberality, and yet the absolute necessity of an unfailing supply of means; the wisdom, prudence and toil involved in the management and outlay of the funds, and the daily and hourly demands which are made upon the Church by these innumerable calls from all quarters for immediate direction, assistance and co-operation—let any one fairly con-

sider these things in connection with the department of Education, or of Domestic Missions, or of Foreign Missions, or of Publication, or of our Seminaries of instruction, and he will at once perceive how vast is the end to be attained and how wisely adapted must be the means for its attainment. Let it also be remembered that all these claims come upon the Church in every period of the year—at all times, and in urgent demand for their immediate consideration and provision. Let it also be borne in mind, that the change of circumstances continually requires a change in the arrangements of the benevolent operations of the Church. It will be thus most certain and evident, that for the wise management of these operations a permanent body of some kind, entrusted with discretionary powers, is absolutely necessary."[1]

Now this whole paragraph, which was intended to show the insufficiency of the plan proposed in our Book, contains nothing but a statement of the various details of the work to be done. The question still returns, Why cannot the Presbyteries accomplish this work just as efficiently as the Boards? The first thing wanted is good and faithful Preachers—a "continually increasing supply of good and faithful Ministers." Now can Boards make them? Is it not the sole prerogative of God, the Holy Spirit, to call and qualify and send forth labourers into the harvest of the world? Does Christ require of the Church anything more than fervent and constant prayer to the Lord of the harvest, and can Boards infuse the spirit of love to a dying world, and the spirit of prayer to our ascended Lord? Boards can no more make a Preacher than they can make the hairs of our heads white or black. These Ministers are to be educated; granted. They are to be sent to the schools and colleges of the country, and if they are unable to pay their expenses they are to be supported by the bounty of the Church. Is there anything in this too hard or too mysterious for a Presbytery to perform? The money must

[1] Balt. Lit. and Rel. Mag. for 1841, pp. 460, 461. See App. A, p. 585.

be collected from particular congregations, and I do not see why the demands of a Presbytery should be less respected than the authority of a Board. I see no magic in an ecclesiastical corporation that shall infallibly open the purses of the people. These Ministers, having been ordained, must next be sent to their various fields of labour—that is to say, they must be supported and sustained. But what is to hinder the Presbyteries from supplying them with the means of going wherever God, in His Providence, may call them? Give them the money, and they can easily procure their own conveyances, and the comforts which their situations require. But the Reviewer begs us to consider the extent of the field. What of that? It is confessedly extensive, being no less than the world; but cannot fifty or a hundred Presbyteries survey it just as well as a single Board? And, again, is it not the duty of each missionary to select his own field? He cannot expect that others should determine for him where God has called him. This is a matter which he must settle for himself, and, having settled it, the Church is to help him on his journey after a godly sort. We are next to consider the number of Ministers to be sent forth. Why cannot the Presbyteries count them just as well as a Board? And why cannot the Presbyteries support them just as comfortably? The money, after all, must be collected from the various churches under the care of the different Presbyteries, and, for aught that I can see, this matter can be attended to just as well by those who have the immediate care of those churches as by a body five hundred miles off. Not to pursue the Reviewer's details any farther, I assert generally that he has not mentioned a single matter which the Church is not fully competent to manage through her regular and constitutional tribunals. And I here challenge him to construct a single syllogism, which will not palpably beg the question, out of any of the materials contained in the passage which has been fully quoted. I doubt, in fact, whether he can read his pompous enumeration of particulars, from which he has

pretended to draw his "most certain and evident" conclusion, without laughing at his own extravagance. It is really amusing to see a man start out with boasting promises of what he intends to prove, and then find that all his reasoning is nothing but a statement, in another form, of the very thing to be proved. The Reviewer's proposition was, that Presbyteries are inadequate to send the Gospel to the heathen; the proof is, that sending the Gospel to the heathen includes a great many particulars; and not a solitary reason is given, why these particulars, so elaborately detailed, are beyond the capacity of the Presbyteries to manage or conduct. If we should grant that his premises prove the necessity of a "permanent body of some kind," we might still ask whether a Presbytery is not as permanent as a Board? It can meet as often upon its own adjournments, and frequency of meeting is all the permanence which any body of the sort can have. "Would any merchant in this mercantile country," asks the Reviewer, with an air of triumph, "entrust to such an agency the accomplishment of such ends, involving such interests, and requiring for their management such continual oversight, such deliberative wisdom? Would any sensible and prudent-minded Christian man commit the affairs of our Missionary Boards, with their hundreds of employed Missionaries, their numerous churches, and their continually increasing openings for enlarged usefulness, or our Board of Education, with hundreds of young men in its watch and care, or our Board of Publication, with all the responsibilities it involves, during the twelve months that intervene between one meeting of the Assembly and another, to a 'bench of Deacons commissioned only to disburse funds,' which funds are to be raised only by Deacons within the bounds of each several congregation?"[1] But here I am constrained to ask, Who ever proposed such a scheme? It is assuredly not to be found in the Argument against Boards. The plan there insisted on is, that the courts of the Church, the *Presbyte-*

[1] Balt. Lit. and Rel. Mag. for 1841, p. 463. See Appendix A, p. 587.

ries, are to do the business now done by the Boards, and to employ these Deacons, according to God's appointment, as their financial agents. And why are not the Presbyteries just as trustworthy, just as faithful, just as able, and just as efficient as the Boards that have been named? We ask the Reviewer to give a sufficient and satisfactory reason, and until he does this all his declamation, however pompous, how full soever of "sound and fury," must still be taken as "signifying nothing." He must show us why it is that the "supervision, direction and control" which he pronounces to be the very life of our benevolent operations, "more important even than money or physical resources," cannot just as safely be committed to the Presbyteries of the Church as to ecclesiastical corporations. I ask triumphantly, Why? and echo answers, Why?

The Reviewer having shown, as he supposed, the inadequacy of the scheme drawn from our Standards and maintained in the Argument against Boards, next proceeds, with equal success, to prove that it is unscriptural and unconstitutional. "It is unscriptural," he asserts. "It cannot be traced to the Scriptures directly; it cannot be deduced from them by necessary inference. It is, therefore, to be denounced as a human invention." Are we then to understand him as asserting that Presbyteries are unscriptural, and that Deacons are not recognized in the Word of God? Does he believe that our whole Presbyterian Form of Government is a mere human invention—not contained in Scripture nor deduced from it by necessary inference? But how does the Reviewer establish his point that the plan set forth in the Argument against Boards is contrary to Scripture? By asserting, first, that Deacons are confined to particular churches, and empowered only to take care of the poor.[1] That Deacons are officers, elected and ordained in particular churches, is true. So are Elders; but as there is nothing in this fact inconsistent with an Elder's acting for the Church at large in our ecclesiastical courts, so there

[1] Balt. Lit. and Rel. Mag. for 1841, p. 465. See Appendix A, p. 589.

is nothing to prevent the Deacon from exercising his peculiar functions in a wider sphere. A Pastor is installed over a particular church, but is he at liberty to preach nowhere else? An Elder belongs to a specific congregation. Is our Constitution, therefore, wrong in permitting him to sit as a member of Presbytery? If the mere fact of being an officer in a particular church necessarily confines one to that congregation alone, the Reviewer will find it a hard task to show how Elders and Pastors are ever formed into Presbyteries. He must either admit that the Presbyterian Form of Government is unscriptural, or that Deacons may act for Presbyteries as they act for their particular congregations. His only alternatives are Congregationalism or the abandoning of his reasoning upon the subject of Deacons. His syllogism is, that whoever is installed as an officer in a particular church can never be an officer of the Church catholic; Deacons are so installed; therefore Deacons can never be officers of the Church catholic. I might change the minor proposition and say, Elders are so installed, and how could he avoid the conclusion? He must evidently abandon his major proposition or abandon Presbyterianism. Which horn of the dilemma will he take? By the same process of reasoning his objections drawn from the Constitution may be conclusively answered. But it seems that Deacons are to be entrusted with nothing but the care of the poor. Is the Reviewer yet to learn that the common method of instruction pursued in the Scriptures is to inculcate general truths by insisting on their particular applications, rather than dealing in abstract statements? Our Saviour teaches the doctrine of a special Providence, by pointing to the fowls of the air, the lilies of the field and the hairs of our heads. Just as in the contemplation of the works of nature we rise to the abstract from the concrete, the general from the particular, so in the book of revelation we are often to pursue the same process of cautious and accurate induction. When our Saviour is asked, Who is our neighbour? He gives no formal and elaborate definition; He simply states

a case, and from that case the principle may be gathered. The Decalogue itself can be proved to be a perfect law only by admitting the principle that "under one sin or duty all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded"—many of the precepts containing only examples of a large class. As, then, it is frequently the method of Scripture to teach by example, where is the impropriety in supposing that the attention to the poor enjoined upon the Deacons was intended to include the whole department of secular business with which the Church was to be concerned? It is certain that the reason assigned by the Apostles for ordering their election applies just as strongly to the collection and disbursement of funds for one purpose as for another. Their purpose was not to get rid of attending to the poor, but to get rid of secular distractions: "It is not reason," said they, "that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the Word."[1] What would they have gained by divesting themselves of the care of the poor, and continuing to be perplexed with the collection of funds for all other purposes? It must be perfectly obvious to every candid mind that the entire secular business of the Church was entrusted to the Deacons; that one specific duty is mentioned, in accordance with the general method of Scripture, as a specimen of a class, and that the reason of the appointment determines the extent of the duties imposed. Here, then, is necessary inference deduced from Scripture, clearly confirming the general position of the Argument against Boards. It is plain, also, that the Deacons acted for the whole college of Apostles, not by travelling about with them in their various missionary tours, but by being under their inspection and control while they continued in Jerusalem. They stood in the same relation to them that I would have them occupy in regard to our Presbyteries. The office of Deacon, then, as set forth in the Argument against Boards, is both scriptural and constitutional, and all the Reviewer's preposterous

[1] Acts vi. 2, 4.

efforts to make me the originator of new officers and a new set of courts are utterly abortive and ridiculous. The idea that a Deacon cannot attend to the secular business of the Presbytery or Assembly, without being removed from his particular congregation, is perfectly ludicrous and absurd. In reading this part of the Reviewer's article one finds it hard to believe that he is really serious. His whole train of reasoning has so much the appearance of a hoax, that one is tempted to fear at every step that he has, after all, been egregiously quizzed.

Still, although he cannot refute it either from the Scriptures or from the Constitution of the Church, the Reviewer obstinately maintains that the scheme defended in the Argument against Boards is "perfectly chimerical. It bases a system of practical operation upon a mere theoretical hypothesis." What! are our Presbyteries merely visionary bodies, incapable of being put into practical operation? Was it a visionary scheme which the Apostles adopted when they desired to be emancipated from secular distraction? Is our whole Form of Government a mere hypothesis which can never be carried into practical effect? If so, it is time to review our Standards and to abandon Presbyterianism as a mere chimera, which, however attractive in theory, can never produce any valuable results. It assumes," continues the Reviewer, "a self-controlling, self-perpetuating principle to exist some where or some how within these operations." This sentence I do not understand. I cannot see why it assumes such a principle in the case of Missions more than in the case of any other Presbyterial business. Nor do I see how, if the Presbyteries are liable to such a charge, the Boards are free from it. The whole sentence is unmeaning. "It attributes," he proceeds, "to our several judicatories a foresight and wisdom which can provide for the thousand contingencies which may arise during the course of every year, and that they could make all those provisional arrangements, in the course of a brief session, which now occupy busily, during the entire year, our several officers and com-

mittees." I would simply ask how often the Boards meet,[1] how long they continue in session, and why the Presbyteries may not possess as large a share of foresight and wisdom as these contrivances possess? The objection lies just as powerfully against the one as it does against the other. If the Boards have Committees to carry out the details of their plans during the interim of their sessions, what is to prevent the Presbyteries from adopting the same arrangement, and

[1] This is an extremely important question, and whatever may be thought of the argument, the churches should know the manner in which these Boards manage the business committed to them. The four Boards of the Church consisted, in 1840, of the following number of members, viz., Board of Domestic Missions, 64 members, (*p.* 61 *of its Report*); the Board of Foreign Missions, 120 members, (*pp.* 31, 32 *of its Report*); the Board of Publication, 104 members, (*pp.* 18, 19 *of its Report*); the Board of Education, 68 members (*p.* 17 *of its Report*). The writer of this note was never a member of the Board of Domestic Missions (as he remembers), and therefore knows little about its internal economy or proceedings. He has been a member of all the remaining three, and has occasionally attended the meetings of each of them. The Board of Publication meets monthly, but if our personal notice is a just rule of judgment, we should say that exclusive of its Executive Committee, so many as one in ten of its members rarely attend its regular meetings. We have attended every meeting of the Board of Foreign Missions, we believe, from its organization; its meetings were at first semi-annual; they are now annual only. The Minutes of 1840 (the latest in our reach), show that the Board held its annual meeting in Philadelphia, that its sessions continued *three* days, and that 40 (out of its 120) members were present, during *some part* of those sessions. Our recollection is, that in 1841 the case was still worse; indeed that not more than a dozen persons regularly attended the short annual sessions of this important body. Now can anything be more ridiculous than to say that a few persons, met for a few days once a year, can fulfil the duties or discharge the obligations of the Church in regard to this vast subject? Or can anything be more insulting to the church courts, than to allege their incompetency *to do this work this well?* It would be a most edifying commentary on the urgent pleas for the incapacity of our church courts and the ardent commendations of the labours of our ecclesiastical corporations, if some one would publish a table of their times of meeting, and the attendance on their meetings, for a series of years. We unhesitatingly assert our conviction to be, that the result would be a new proof of what we long ago asserted to be the fact, viz., that the whole power of those Boards is ultimately vested in a few persons, who are virtually self-appointed. *Note by Ed. of the Baltimore Magazine.*

what is to hinder the Presbyteries from meeting just as often as emergencies may require? In chapter xviii. of our Form of Government, such a Committee in each Presbytery seems to be contemplated; and this, by the way, is an additional proof that our fathers intended to entrust the whole work of Missions to the care of the Presbyteries. "It assumes," adds the Reviewer, "that the funds will be voluntarily forthcoming from all our churches in every portion of the Church." And do the Boards assume that these funds shall be *forcibly* forthcoming? The Lord loveth a cheerful giver, and we have no reason to expect that any but free-will offerings will be accepted of God. I do not see how Boards can raise money at pleasure, whether the people choose to give it or no. If there is not a spirit of love to dying souls and of zeal for the Lord's kingdom diffused among our churches, no organization on earth can make them do the work of the Lord. If the heart be not right, the acts will never be good; if the tree be not sound, the fruit can never be wholesome. The Reviewer evidently thinks that there is some magic in a Board which shall charm avarice into liberality, inspire a love of God where the Saviour's love has never been shed abroad, kindle a flame of zeal in the hearts of the formal and hypocritical, and discharge all the offices which the Scriptures attribute to the Holy Ghost. But I would beg him to remember that there was a point at which the magicians of Egypt were compelled to pause. There were some wonders which their enchantments could not compass, and which only the finger of God could achieve. "It seems to imply," he further asserts, "that such benches of Deacons and such general treasurers can be found to devote themselves to such agencies and duties, and to do so gratuitously." And why is it any harder to find Deacons for our churches than Elders? And why should they not be paid for their services if it should be found necessary? Is there none who love God in any of our churches, who would be as willing to serve the Lord in attending to the stuff as those who were ordained to a much more trou-

blesome business at Jerusalem? The Reviewer seems to think that there is no such thing as vital godliness in any of our congregations; that the Boards are a standing substitute for the graces of the Spirit; and that, consequently, if they should be removed, the wants of a dying world would never excite the first tear of sympathy, the first sigh of compassion, the first prayer for relief, or the first effort for its salvation. If this, indeed, be the condition of our multiplied churches, Ichabod may be written upon our walls. The glory has departed, and no inventions of man can ever save us from the withering curse of an insulted God. If this, indeed, be so, the heathen world may say to our people, as the Saviour said to the daughters of Jerusalem, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves." Our first work is evidently at home, in our own hearts, and we should give no sleep to our eyes, nor slumber to our eyelids, till the insulted Spirit of God has returned to our desolate Zion and built up the walls of our ruined city. If we are dead ourselves, we cannot expect to give life to others; our most laborious efforts will be only those of the dead burying their dead. If, on the other hand, we are alive to God, and He has enlarged our hearts, we will run in the way of all His commandments; our meat and our drink will be to do the will of our heavenly Father; and men in abundance will be found to fill all the offices which Christ has appointed in His Church. His people shall be willing in the day of His power.

I beg the reader now to review calmly and dispassionately the assumptions—which the Reviewer declares to be "most utopian and gratuitous"—charged upon the Argument against Boards, in the passage which has been considered, sentence by sentence, and seriously ask himself whether they amount to anything more than this: that Christian men love the Lord Jesus Christ and His cause, and are willing, in their several stations and departments of labour, to spend and be spent in His service? Is not this the whole of that violent hypothesis, on account of

which the scheme which I defend is pronounced to be preposterous in the extreme? And has it come to this, that all faith, all love, all zeal, have departed from our borders, and that a man who shall venture to assume that such things as grace and piety are to be found in the length and breadth of the whole Presbyterian Church in these United States of America, must be held up as utterly wild, utopian and visionary—bereft of his senses and in love with chimeras? Alas for the Church! to what a pass are we come! And dost thou, my brother, read me a lecture for speaking disrespectfully of the Boards? Shall the man who does not tremble, notwithstanding solemn vows, to denounce the institutions of God and to uncover the nakedness of the mother that has nursed him, who does not hesitate to revile the Lord's people as a nation of hypocrites and a race of evil-doers, who is shocked at the assumption that any man can be found so utterly utopian as to love the Lord Jesus Christ and His cause and to count it a privilege to labour in his Master's vineyard, be yet astonished and amazed when the suspicion is expressed that Boards are not the best guarantees of the faith once delivered to the saints? Whence all this zeal for the soundness of the Boards and all this contempt for the piety of the Church? How comes it to pass that the Boards should be such guardians of orthodoxy, so zealous for the Lord, when all the Church is *dead*, *dead*, utterly dead? And which is the greater sin, to question the excellence of ecclesiastical Boards, or to question the grace of all our churches? He cannot deny that his whole argument against the efficiency of Presbyteries proceeds on the assumption that neither they nor the churches take any interest in the matter; and this is tantamount to saying that there is no real love to God or His kingdom among all His professing people. He is fairly shut up to the conclusion that the scriptural organization is sufficient, or that the spirit of piety is extinct in our churches.

I think, now, that it may be safely concluded that the Reviewer has totally failed to substantiate his position, that

the scheme which he opposes is "preposterous in the extreme, altogether visionary, and in no degree adapted to the necessities of the case." In other words, the ends to be accomplished by the Boards can be accomplished as easily, safely and efficiently without them, through the regular action of our ecclesiastical system. His defence of Boards, consequently, falls to the ground. His argument was, that the Church has a right to appoint them because she cannot do without them. For aught that appears, she *can* do without them; therefore, upon his own principle, she has no right to appoint them. The necessity upon which the right was suspended does not exist, and consequently the right itself disappears "*in levi aere*." The Church can ordain Ministers just as well without them as with them. She can send them abroad just as well without them as with them. She can raise funds just as well without them as with them. She can attend to all proper secular and spiritual concerns just as well without them as with them. Therefore they may be safely given to the winds. And this is the conclusion of the whole matter.

There is an *a priori* argument against the principle of the Reviewer that God has prescribed only the ends to be accomplished, and left the invention and adjustment of the means to the wisdom and discretion of the Church herself, which, it would seem, ought to give satisfaction to every Christian man. That argument was fully stated in the Argument against Boards, and noticed in the review only to be perverted. Was there ever a more remarkable instance of evasion than the following sentence affords?—"It is maintained by the objector, 'that our Saviour constituted His Church with a special reference to Missionary operations'; therefore the Church is under obligation to carry on such operations by the best and most effective agency."[1] The principle of the Argument against Boards is, that the visible organization of the Church, consisting of its courts and officers, was so constituted and arranged as that Mission-

[1] Balt. Lit. and Rel. Mag. for 1841, p. 463. See Appendix A, p. 588.

ary operations, through and by it, might be readily and efficiently conducted. Therefore, says the Reviewer, she is "under obligation to carry on such operations by the best and most effective agency." That is, because God has made and ordained her as His instrumental agent in this business, she is at liberty to appoint and ordain another for herself. The Head of the Church is virtually charged with folly in all His arrangements, His plans are found to be utterly defective and inadequate, and unless the Church interposes with her wisdom the world must die without the light of the knowledge of God. Christ has constructed a machine for a particular purpose; the machine, however, is so clumsily put together, that it will not and cannot work until man has given it the finishing stroke. What an impeachment of Divine wisdom, and what an extraordinary specimen of reasoning! He who should seriously maintain that because God has given us eyes for the purposes of vision, therefore we are under obligation to use spectacles, or, because He has given us legs for the purpose of walking, therefore we are bound to resort to crutches, would reason precisely as the Reviewer reasons in the case before us—God has appointed the Church for the purpose of holding forth the Word of life to a perishing world, therefore we are under obligation to fabricate Boards. But passing by this miserable sophistry, is it so that Jesus Christ has constituted the Church with a special reference to Missionary operations? Is it her business to hold the truth as a precious deposit, to bear testimony to it among the dying sons of men, and to proclaim it fully to earth's remotest bounds? What say our Standards and what say the Scriptures? "Unto this catholic, visible Church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God, for the *gathering* [mark the expression] and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them *effectual* thereunto."[1] The reader will note that *God* makes

[1] Confession of Faith, ch. xxv., sec. 3.

His Ministers, Word and ordinances effectual by *His presence* and *Spirit*. So says the Confession. The Reviewer says that the *Church* makes them *effectual* by *her own Boards*. But possibly our Standards may be wrong. What say the Scriptures? "And he gave some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."[1] It is plain, that Christ, in giving gifts to His Church, supposed that He had sufficiently furnished her for the work which He had set before her. The Church herself, at that time, thought nothing more was needed; for we find her going forward on her grand Missionary enterprise with no other agencies in operation but just those which Christ had appointed; and experience would seem to indicate that she was abundantly provided for her office, as no Missionary annals that the world has ever seen contain more signal and striking proofs of success than the Acts of the Apostles. But, however this may be, we are shut up to the conclusion, that Christ's expectations were disappointed, and His plan was a failure, or that the Church, as constituted in the New Testament, is adequately furnished for discharging effectually all her obligations; and as the wisdom of the Son of God cannot be questioned, we are bound to believe that the "Word, the ministry, and the ordinances of God" will always be made effectual, by His presence and Spirit, in gathering His sheep from the four quarters of the globe. There is but one way of evading this argument, and that is, by denying that there is any model of church-organization divinely prescribed, or that it had reference to the duties and functions to be discharged by the Church; neither of which can consistently be done by any true Presbyterian. The scriptural view of the Church, as a visible institution, is that she is a mere instrumentality employed by Christ for the purpose of accomplishing His own ends. She is the body, and He the Head; and as the members can only

[1] Eph. iv. 11, 12.

move and act by the volitions of the head, so the Church is subject to the will of Christ in all things. She has no will, wisdom nor power of herself. She is the instrument, and He the agent. She is not His confidential adviser, to whom He reveals His purposes, and whom He consults concerning His plans. She is not His confidential agent, to whom He communicates His will, and leaves it to be executed as *she* may see best. She is a *positive institution*, and therefore must show a definite warrant for everything that she does. It is not enough that her measures are not *condemned*. They must be *sanctioned, positively sanctioned*, by the power which ordains her, or they are null and void. Like the Congress of the United States, she acts under a written Constitution, and must produce her *written authority* for all that she undertakes. Hence, so far is the Church from having the power to ordain means, that she is herself the *very means* by which her glorious Head accomplishes His purposes in the world; and, therefore, as being ordained by Him, must be completely adequate to meet the ends in view: and this conclusion being once admitted, the argument of the Reviewer necessarily falls to the ground. If he should contend that where duties are enjoined, the power to perform them is conveyed, behold all the power in the Divine Constitution of the Church! If he should still persist that where ends are proposed to be accomplished, adequate means must be adopted, behold! God has given us the means in the same Divine institution, and promised to render them effectual by His presence and Spirit. In this way I have sufficiently answered the Reviewer, by showing that his minor proposition is false, without entering into a full refutation, as I might do, and as I may yet have to do, of his major. At present, I have preferred the course which would give me the opportunity of showing that we might leave the subject of Missions just where it is left in our Standards. I have thought it sufficient to state that his fundamental principle is a fallacy into which he has been led by confounding two things entirely separate, and leave

it to his own candour to abandon it. I have felt no serious inclination to expose it, as I do not suppose that there are half a dozen Ministers in the Presbyterian Church who could seriously embrace it when fairly set before them in its naked deformity. He chose to rest the defence of Boards upon their *necessity*. On that ground I have fully met him. The argument between us might here rest. But I think it well, before closing this article, to notice briefly some of the objections to the Argument against Boards which have not yet passed under our notice.

One of its charges against the Boards was, that they give us a set of ecclesiastical officers and courts separate from those acknowledged in our Standards. This the Reviewer denies, and insists upon it, that those engaged in the service of the Boards are Ministers and Elders of the Church, and do not cease to be such in consequence of their relations to the Boards. The service of the Boards, let it be remembered, becomes their calling—their distinct vocation. Is it the service to which they were ordained? Is it not a very different employment from the usual duties of Ruling Elder, Bishop or Evangelist? I shall not quarrel about a name. If the duties of these men are different from those to which they were ordained, the purpose of my argument is answered. It signifies little what they were when they went there. The question is, What do they become after they go there? As to the Boards being ecclesiastical courts, the Reviewer admits again and again that they have spiritual jurisdiction, that they are entrusted with the oversight of the spiritual affairs of the Missions, that they exercise spiritual functions in God's house. What more can be said of a Presbytery or a Synod? If you should maintain that it is necessary to a court that its powers should be inherent and original, you may change the word which the Argument against Boards applies to the Boards, but the thing itself remains: the unlawful power is still possessed and exercised, and they only do what, if they were courts, they would do. The point of the argument is in the possession and exercise of the power,

and not in the application of the name. The Reviewer denies that Boards interfere with the parity of the ministry, and yet admits that undue influence may be exerted by them. I can only testify as to what I have seen and heard. I saw and heard a Ruling Elder give a solemn charge to two Ministers of the Gospel, just as they were preparing to leave their native land to labour among distant and perishing heathen. What more would a Right Reverend Prelate have done under the same circumstances? The Reviewer also maintains, that what is done by the Boards is done by the Church in her ecclesiastical capacity. He would be nearer the truth in saying that it is *appointed* by her, in her ecclesiastical capacity. The work is certainly done not by herself, but her agents.

Finally, the Reviewer demolishes his own argument by admitting that no one is under any moral obligation to support the Boards. They do not, according to his own statement which I leave him to reconcile with other statements which he has made upon the same general subject—they do not bind the conscience. Then we are at liberty to destroy them. They cannot surely be so vastly important as he makes them, and yet have their existence suspended on so slender a thread. Every dollar might be withheld from them, and yet no guilt incurred. They might all be destroyed, and yet no sin committed. As, then, according to his own confession, there is no sin in refusing to sustain them, and as many of his brethren believe that there is much danger in upholding them, the safest course is to let them alone or consign them to the tomb of "all the Capulets."

Before closing this article, I wish to present a few additional considerations showing that the Presbyteries ought to take the whole business of Missions into their own hands.

1. The first is, that the Constitution of the Church absolutely requires it. Those who have attentively studied our Form of Government will perceive that two leading ends were contemplated by its framers. The first has reference

to the peace, union and harmony of the whole body, and the second relates to its extension and enlargement. The Church is regarded as one whole, and its visible organization is adapted to its unity. The General Assembly is the "bond of union, peace, correspondence and mutual confidence among all our churches."[1] Our system of courts of appellate jurisdiction, and the distribution and arrangement of their powers, are admirably suited to bind all the parts of the Church together, and to preserve the unity and integrity of the body. But the Church must be *enlarged* as well as *united*. Now it is evident that there can be no extension without the formation of individual churches. This is the first step—the Church spreads by increasing the number of its particular congregations. Whatever provision, therefore, our Constitution has made for the formation of new churches is just its provision for Missionary operations. Wherever it has lodged the power to do the one, it has lodged the power to do the other. Now this power is expressly given to the Presbyteries,[2] and to the Presbyteries exclusively; and hence, by necessary inference, the Presbyteries are the Missionary agents contemplated by our system. The Synods and General Assembly cannot directly interfere until the Presbyteries have done their work and supplied the materials, in the formation of new churches out of which other Presbyteries and other Synods may be formed. The Synods and Assembly are courts of *union*, having reference only to churches already existing. The Presbyteries are also *formative* bodies, giving existence to the parts to be united. The only way in which the Assembly or Synod can plant a Mission is by "directing the Presbyteries to ordain Evangelists or Ministers without relation to particular churches."[3] How undeniably plain, then, that our Constitution never contemplated any other agencies for Missions but Presbyteries, with whom it has lodged the

[1] Form of Government, ch. xii., sec. 4.

[2] Ibid., ch. xviii., sec. 8.

[3] Ibid., ch. x.

power to ordain Ministers and form new churches; which includes the chief business of Missions!

2. Another reason—which I repeat here because the Reviewer seems not to have understood it as stated in the Argument against Boards—is that, in this way, the churches will know what they are actually sending to the heathen, whether the Gospel of Christ or the traditions of men. The Boards require that all their Ministers should be endorsed by Presbyteries. Very true; but what signifies an endorsement to me by a man or body of men of whom I am profoundly ignorant? *Personal knowledge*, either of the party sent or of the party recommending, is indispensably necessary in order that our churches may support a man with a good conscience. They should either know him themselves or know those who testify to his character. Under the system of Boards, the churches in South Carolina may be supporting a man sent out by a Presbytery denouncing them as unchristian and hypocritical—a Presbytery that would silence all their Ministers and excommunicate all their members. They do not know to whom their money goes. How then can their prayers and their alms go together? But let the Presbyteries take the matter in hand, and their churches will know who are supported; and as all the Presbyteries in the same Synod are personally known to each other, they can assist in sustaining each other's missionaries, and know what they are doing. There is here a security against abuse—against an ignorant upholding of false men and false doctrines.

3. Another reason is, that by such an arrangement the undivided energies of our churches might be called into action. The whole body would be reached. Let it be made a part of the ordinary business of our Presbyteries to pray and provide for the wants of a perishing world, and a new and glorious order of things would speedily arise. But as this point has been urged in the Argument against Boards, I proceed to a reason drawn from the peculiar condition of the Church.

4. There are elements of division among us—points on which Presbyteries and Synods are known to be divided. A central plan of action, therefore, cannot be adopted with any hope that it shall be permanent. I need not specify. My meaning will be obvious to those who have watched the progress of discussion and the march of opinion on the subjects of slavery, temperance, and kindred topics. Prudence would seem to dictate that our combinations, if we would preserve peace, must be as few as possible. In this way Christian charity and the unity of the Church may be alike preserved.

I have now, as I think, sufficiently noticed the objections of the Reviewer to the Argument against Boards, and completely refuted him upon his own ground. His ideas of church-government and ecclesiastical power strike me as being exceedingly loose and exceedingly dangerous. His notions are even more extravagant than those of High-churchmen and Prelatists, for they do make the Church a *Divine* institution; but he makes it, to a mournful degree, a mere human association, and then clothes it with the same extraordinary powers which the strenuous advocates of the apostolical succession ascribe to it. If he believed that Presbyterianism rests on Divine authority, he would undoubtedly have more faith in its efficiency, and be less prone to try the expedients of man in its stead. My faith in the adaptation of our system is founded on my faith in its Divine origin. Believing that our Zion is the city of our God, and that he has promised to establish her for ever, I am fully persuaded, that, if we would carry our principles into thorough, practical operation, His presence and Spirit would attend us and make our walls salvation and our gates praise. Let us only have faith in the success and efficacy of Divine institutions, and we shall find experience more than justifying our highest expectations. The sickly sentimentalism, which for years has passed current for the spirit of Missions, which has been fostered and diffused by the American Board and kindred institutions, and which ap-

peals to the carnal sympathies of man rather than to the faith of God's elect, has had its day and done its work. The real spirit of Missions—a spirit of jealousy for the Lord God of hosts, of love to a glorious Saviour, and of ardent attachment to the pure, spiritual principles of His kingdom, combined with a godly desire to save the souls of men from death—is beginning to revive. The Church is waking up to the magnitude and importance of the contest with the powers of darkness; and knowing her enemies and the enemies of man to be strong, vigilant and active, she is inquiring for tried armour—for weapons which shall stand in the day of battle, and drive her enemies discomfited before her. She is returning to the simplicity of faith, and inquiring for the old paths of safety and success. It is a good omen. I trust that a glorious destiny yet awaits our Church; that God has delivered her from a long, dark, mournful bondage to Pelagian principles and Pelagian measures, and is now about to deliver her from an equally galling bondage to human traditions, for the purpose of making her a joy and praise in the whole earth. As the Israelites were brought up harnessed out of Egypt to drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite and Hittite from the promised land, so we are brought up from as mournful a captivity, and girded with the whole armour of God, to take possession, in the name of our Master, of the revolted tribes of earth. God is preparing us for a noble enterprise. Let all our Presbyteries, marshalled under their glorious Leader, go out like the tribes of Israel under the conduct of Joshua; let them all come up in unbroken phalanx to the help of the Lord, the help of the Lord against the mighty, and they will soon have as signal wonders to celebrate as the ancient people of God. What we want is *faith*—faith in the Divine promises, faith in the Divine appointments; and when this faith is imparted, earthen pitchers and lamps will be strong and resistless in our hands. To this faith our Church is returning. God grant that she soon may be fully established upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone!

DEBATE TOUCHING CHURCH-BOARDS.

THE question before the General Assembly being: Is it expedient to make any organic change in the organization of the Board of Domestic Missions?—Dr. THORNWELL said:

The Report under discussion exhibits a diversity of opinions as to the most effective organization for the Board. This diversity has long existed, and it is a diversity of opinion, deep, radical and sincere. The question has been agitated in the Assembly and through the press. It is curious to notice the manner in which the friends of the present organization have treated the opinions of their opponents. It is not very long since they earnestly insisted that the difference between us and themselves was merely nominal, "mere hair-splitting," the difference merely "'twixt tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee." But the obvious inference then was, that they ought to have conceded the change. Suppose those who desire the change are weak, but conscientious: if there be no real difference in principle, why not yield to the weak? Why not give up to the conscientious the trifling boon they ask? We do not profess to be strong-minded or large-minded, but we do profess to love Christ, and to feel bound to see, so far as in us lies, that the Church does execute His commands; and if you think there is no principle that divides us, why not indulge our conscientious objections?

But *now* the ground of our brethren is shifted. The difference between us and them is now admitted to be one of importance. It is vital and essential. The things at stake are substance, and not shadow. At first we were mere theorists, advocating what did not differ from the system actually existing; but now the thing that was declared a mere abstraction begins to be viewed as something very dangerous. Moderator, I accept that view of our differences which makes them real and important, and I will proceed to show the *source* of these differences.

The discussion now resumed is deprecated by some of the brethren

here as evil, and likely to beget more evil. I do not deprecate it. We are met to discuss great questions that concern the Redeemer's glory and the interests of His kingdom. We all love the truth, and are equally concerned for the honour of Christ's Church. We have no by-ends to subserve. I am no party man, but I am thoroughly a Presbyterian, and, having come here to deliberate and vote for the good of the Church, I wish to state the grounds upon which my vote shall be cast.

This whole question is but an off-shoot from another question dividing the minds of brethren amongst us, and that question is *the organization of the Church itself*. Our differences about Boards spring legitimately from our differences as to the nature and constitution of the Church. There are amongst us those who hold that God gave us our church-government, as truly as He gave us our doctrines; and that we have no more right to add to the church-government, which is Divine, than to add to the doctrine, which is Divine. They hold that while the Church may, of course, employ whatever agency is really necessary to do the work entrusted to her,—for that is implied in the very command which enjoins her duty,—yet she has no discretionary power to create a new church court or judicatory, or body, of whatever name, to stand in her own place.

Others, as wise and as good men as the first, believe no definite form of church-government is of Divine origin, but God has left it to *man* to organize His Church; and that just as civil government was ordained of God in the general, but man is left to arrange its particular form as may, in his view, best suit particular circumstances, so church-government may be modified according to circumstances—according to human ideas of expediency, at the whims of men. God gave only general principles, and man is to work out of them the best system that he can. Thus, one party amongst us holds that Christ gave us the materials and principles of church-government, and has left us to shape them pretty much as we please. But the other holds that God gave us *a Church*, a Constitution, laws, Presbyteries, Assemblies, Presbyters, and all the functionaries necessary to a complete organization of His kingdom upon the earth and to its effective operation; that He has revealed an *order* as well as a *faith*, and that as our attitude in the one case is to hear and *believe*, in the other it is to hear and *obey*. Of one of these parties the motto is, "you may do all that the Scriptures do not forbid;" of the other, "you can do only what the Scriptures command."

There is no use in blinking this question, for we know that this radical difference respecting the Church does exist, and that those of us who hold the opinions first referred to contend that man is not to be the *counsellor of God*, but is to accept the Church as it comes from

God, and do what He enjoins. We cannot appoint another co-ordinate body to do the work which God appointed us to do. The General Assembly is, and ought to be held to be, the Board of Missions itself. Christ never authorized us to put this work into other hands. It will be said these views are narrow; but are they not true? They are founded on the *jus divinum* theory of church-government, which recognizes all the members of this court as members of it, because God has appointed them to this trust. We contend, Moderator, as sincerely and as conscientiously for the great principles of Presbyterian order as for those of the faith allied to it. The oneness of the Church, its federative unity, is one of these principles. Another is the representative principle; upon which principle it is that any of us are here, and upon which principle it is that all of us are alike here—Ministers and Elders—upon precisely the same footing as members of this court. We are all here as Ruling Elders; only rulers can enter into the assemblies of the Church; we cannot admit here any person that is not recognized as a ruler in the Holy Scriptures. And the Ruling Elder is not here simply by appointment of the people. Both come here as the representatives or chosen rulers of the people, equally of Divine right and authority, and equally entitled to be here as rulers of the Lord's house. And it is in this capacity, as rulers in Christ's kingdom, that the members of this court have committed to them, for the Church, that work which they may not delegate to any other body. Is it said that thus I deny the right to any other denomination to call itself a Church of Christ? I do not deny it. A Church may be a true Church though imperfect in its organization, as a man may be united to Christ by a saving faith, yet deny doctrines the reception of which is essential to the perfection of Christian character.

[Here Dr. THORNWELL was interrupted by the hour of adjournment. On the next day, after recapitulating what he had already said, he continued:]

The Church has a charter of faith and of practice, and wherever she cannot plead the authority of God, she has no right to act. She has no opinion; she has a faith. She has no contrivances; she has a law. This is the doctrine of our Confession of Faith. Her authority is all ministerial and declarative. She only declares the law of the Lord, and only exercises the powers He gives, and only executes the work He enjoins. No other regulations are left for her to make and to enforce, save those of circumstantial details; and the power to make these is implicitly contained in the general command given to her. It is also explicitly given in the precept to "do all things decently and in order." Whatever executive agency is requisite in order

to do her appointed work she can, of course, employ; but she may not go outside of this necessity and transfer her work to another body to be performed by them.

If this notion of church-power be conceded, if we correctly apprehend the real nature of church-courts as Divine institutions, and if we duly conceive of the solemnity and responsibility of all their action, we are prepared to see how all this bears upon the question of Boards. Now, what is a Board? Have the brethren distinctly conceived in their own minds what it is? I do not ask for the meaning of it, in the etymological sense, as when we speak of a Board of Health, or of Commerce; but in the sense defined in the Constitution of this Board of Missions, as an actual part of the machinery of the Presbyterian Church. I ask for the meaning of the word as the thing is actually understood among us, and distinguished from a simple Committee. What is a *Board* of this General Assembly?

In the first place, it is an *organism* and not an *organ*. It is a complete body, to which the General Assembly has entrusted a department of the work committed to it. It is a complete whole; all the parts of a separate, self-acting organization belong to it. It has head, body, limbs, hands, tongue; and now they want to give it feet, that as it exists alone it may also go alone. It has a President for its head, with a body of many members; it has an Executive Committee for its hands; and now our brethren propose, by a "Travelling Secretary," to give it feet to travel—to travel over the whole land, and, if they could, they would enable it to fly with the wings of the wind.

Now take this body, thus organized and equipped, and wherein does it differ from a church-court? Talk of it as a mere organ!—a mere hand to be directed and moved and used by the Church! It is a hand that has an arm of its own to move it, and a head of its own to direct it; and, as experience has lately shown, it moves more obediently to its own head than to the Assembly. It is as completely a moral person, with rights and powers to all intents and purposes complete and definite, as any court in the Presbyterian Church. It stands up, side by side, along with the courts which Christ has ordained, and we have handed over to it the work we ourselves ought to do. In what, I ask, does it differ from a Synod or a Presbytery? The sphere of those may be larger and more varied, but the nature of the power conferred upon this is the same. You say the Board is responsible to the General Assembly; so is a Synod. You say a breath can annihilate the Board; so it may a Synod. The Assembly has as much power over the Synod as it has over the Board, and it can dissolve the Synod just as it can dissolve the Board. In fact, we see the Board standing side by side with the General Assembly itself, as fully officered, as complete in its organization, and even more

perpetual in its existence, so far as it regards its component members! What are the courts of the Church but organisms of the Church, through which Jesus Christ has ordained that she shall act? But in these Boards you have set up other courts co-ordinate with His courts, and as supreme in their own sphere.

Now, sir, the question comes up, Who gave you the power to make such co-ordinate courts? You say they are confessedly lawful, because mere circumstantial details. These mere circumstances! All this needed to be supplemented to the equipments of our Church! Then is any other Church as well equipped as ours for the Missionary work, for any other Church can append to itself these human contrivances as well as ours! You say it is not forbidden, and is therefore allowed, because necessary. But have we not always boasted that our Church is adequate, *as organized in the Scriptures*, to do all the work required at its hands? Have we not gloried in our polity as complete, with all the muscles, veins and arteries of a perfect system of life and motion? Have we not said to Congregationalists, You are radically defective in coherency, and have to form societies unknown to the Word of God; and to Prelatists, You have to borrow of us a General Convention of Presbyters? But our brethren have actually formed within our own Church bodies which Independents were driven to form, because their polity is inadequate to the work Christ requires of His people! We are throwing away our birthright, and putting on the rags and tatters of Independency! Yes! we take up its rags and tatters, and endeavour out of them to patch up something which we offer to Christ and to the world as a substitute for His divinely organized Church! The whole thing is a virtual reproach upon that Divine organization which we profess to have received from the Holy Word, and in clinging to it we pertinaciously repudiate in practice the very Church in which we profess to glory! Is our Church competent or is she not competent to do her work? Is she so organized, and so equipped, and so officered, that she can, in the use of her own courts and her own powers, do what the Master has bidden her to do? If not, then openly acknowledge your beggary, and cast about for the best system you can find! If not, then openly acknowledge your impotency, and pronounce your Divine institutions a failure!

In the second place, what is the relation to the Assembly of the Boards as thus completely organized? They are the *vicars* of the Assembly. God gave the Church a work to do *in her organized capacity*; she refuses to do that work in that organized capacity, but appoints another organization to do it *in its organized capacity*. The Boards are the *vicars* of the Assembly, and are *in its place*. They are the representatives of the Church *as an organized body*. This is, in fact, admitted privately by our brethren, for they hold that when a Board

acts the Assembly acts. They will tell you that the Boards are the Assembly's representatives, doing the work in the place of the Assembly; and they quote the maxim which we admit to be applicable here, "*Qui facit per alium facit per se.*" But, Moderator, who gave the courts of the Church a right to act *in their organized capacity* by *vicars* or *representatives?* Congress has power to make certain laws: can Congress delegate this power to another body? Would the country submit to let Congress confer upon a Board of its appointment the power of legislation, so that it might go home and take its ease? Now, Jesus Christ has commissioned His Church to carry the Gospel into all the world, and has furnished you in full for the work, and you are, *in your organized capacity*, through your *courts and their own executive agencies*, to carry on that work. And now, can you come to that Saviour and say: It is too troublesome to do Thy bidding ourselves—too inconvenient to superintend and carry on this work directly with our own executive agency, and in our own organized capacity, as the Church; but here is our *vicar*, here is our *representative*, here is a Board which we have constituted, and to which we have delegated these prerogatives and duties Thou didst enjoin upon us?

Can you act in this matter by a *vicar?* Have you a *right* thus to act? You cannot: you have no such power conferred upon you as a Church. And let me, then, remind my brethren that this binding limitation of church-power is what the people of God have always contended for. This was the very point in dispute between the Puritans and the Church of England. That Church maintained that the Scriptures did not forbid the Liturgy, nor the sign of the Cross, nor kneeling at the Supper, nor the gown and surplice, and so these might all be ordained by the Church. But the Puritans contended that none of these is required in the Bible, and so none of them might be imposed. The absence of the grant, they said, is the negation of the power. And what did our Covenanting fathers in Scotland fight for but the same principle, that the Church can claim no power not granted in the Bible? And how did the Popes get their foot upon the necks of the nations but through this same principle, that the Church has powers not given to her in the Word? And we, sir, to-day, are standing up for the only principle that can keep this Church of ours from flying off out of her orbit and dashing into the orbits of other stars—the principle that the Church has no right to act except as she has the authority of God for acting.

In the third place, let us look at the principles of action which have governed these creations, and we shall see still more plainly that they are complete organizations, and, also, that they work evil and not good. The practical ends of the Boards have been two: 1st. They aim to awaken interest; 2dly. To increase funds. As to the first end, the

idea was that there must be a body specially devoted to awakening the Missionary spirit in the Church. The Missionary spirit was not to be the healthful action of the Church's life, but a substitute for it; something worked up in the Church's bosom by special influences and excitements. There must be a large institution or Society in the bosom of the Church, corresponding to the American Board of Missions, and men must be stimulated into Missionary zeal by being invested with the honorable distinction of membership. Thus a set of men were selected who were, by this means, to have the spirit of Missions kindled *in them*. Now, was not this destructive of the idea that the Church is the body to be interested? Must not this have weakened the general influence of the idea that the Church herself is a Missionary Society, and that every member of the Church is to have a part and to be responsible for a share in the work?

But the other end to be gained was the increase of funds. This was sought to be attained by the sale of these distinctions. Sir, it has been my lot to have part in many earnest debates in the church-courts, and I do not know that I was ever yet betrayed into saying an unkind word of any man in the Church, or of any institution in the Church I was called on to oppose. But, sir, every instinct of my nature, and every holy impulse implanted within me by the Spirit of God, rises up with indignation and horror against this principle that men may buy places of honour and trust in this free, glorious Commonwealth of Jesus Christ. I do revolt against this paid membership, this entitling of men for money to become consulting members of the Church or of her Boards—which they tell us are the same thing—this selling distinctions and honours in the Church of Christ for filthy lucre, when nothing is plainer than that the love of Christ should form the only motive of all our contributions. Whatever shall be the result of this discussion, Moderator, were it in my power I would at least expunge and utterly and for ever blot out this organic feature of our present system, as I hope God will wash out the sin and shame of it in the blood of His dear Son.

But there was also at first, and for a long time, connected with this scheme for raising funds, a system of Agents, as part and parcel of the same arrangement. The first indication of healthful action in the Church upon this whole subject was her revolt against the employment of Agents to do a work which the Pastors, Elders, Deacons and people were organized into a church on purpose to do. Slowly and reluctantly, sir, some of the very brethren who confront us to-day consented to dispense with this system. Slowly and reluctantly they were persuaded to rely upon the church-organization which the Lord gave us for the collection of the benefactions of His people. But it was done, and the "innovation" proved, as they all now confess, most advanta-

geous. And, Moderator, I look for the time, and I predict that it is not far off, when the Church, acting in the spirit of similar "innovation," shall, with a whip of small cords, drive out all the buyers and sellers from our temple.

Here there was a complete system, a regular and perfect organization, a Church of men by the side of the Church of God, and doing a work committed only to the Church of God. Such is the scheme of the Boards as established in the Presbyterian Church. Moderator, I have confidence in the men who control our Boards, and whilst in their hands we may escape the more serious evils which we dread, yet, even now, there is discernible in the Boards a disposition to act independently of the Assembly. Like Lord Chatham to his constituents, the Boards have been heard to say to the Assembly, "We regard not your *instructions*, for we have too much regard for your *interests*." In worse hands all these evils which we have pointed out would grow worse. The egg of the serpent is harmless, but it contains a serpent. The Boards may be harmless now, but they contain a principle fraught with mischief in the day of trial. It is safer to adhere to the Word, and the system we have derived from it, than to be ever consulting the suggestions of human wisdom and mere expediency. While we stand by principle Christ is with us, but when we forsake our principles we desert Him.

Now, sir, let us look at the opposite system.

Its *first* principle is, that the Church, in her organized capacity, is a society for all spiritual purposes. Every church-court is a Board of Christ's appointment, and every Christian is a member of a Missionary Society. We assume this as our cardinal principle. This was the great point in dispute in the New School controversy.

The *second* principle is, that, the Church being a Missionary Society, the measure of its power, in relation to the details of its action, is whatever *is necessary to execute these functions*. To this point we are restricted. Now, what are the things that are necessary for the discharge of the work given to the Church? Three things seem to be essential: 1. Wisdom in council; 2. Efficiency of action; 3. Responsibility. All these ends are answered by a Committee (or by a Commission) appointed by the Assembly, as a *bona fide* organ. The Committee unites deliberation, simplicity and direct and immediate responsibility to the Assembly. Every desirable end can be secured legitimately without delegating our work to another body, as our vicar in our stead.

But, *thirdly*, the organization must of course look to the raising of funds, and here comes in the idea of systematic giving—of giving as worship—and completes the system. With the machinery of the Church accommodated to its Divine charter, you may confidently trust

to the life of the Church, that, by the grace of God, it will answer to the doctrine of giving, as it shall be held up by a faithful ministry. When this doctrine was first urged as furnishing a substitute for Agencies, our brethren opposed it as an "innovation," and would have clung to the Agencies. When we pleaded that systematic giving is to be viewed as a *part of religion*, our brethren still viewed it as *a scheme* —a piece of machinery—and called it "your *plan*." So, now, this doctrine that the Church, in her organized capacity, must do her own work, and not delegate it to vicars, is called by these brethren "your *theory*." I contend that it is *of God*. We then contended that systematic giving is part of our religion, part of our worship, and a part which cannot be performed by proxy any more than can prayer or praise. So in reference to the Church's work of Evangelization. She is responsible for it herself, in her organized capacity, and may not undertake to do that work by vicar any more than she may pray by vicar. And the great need of the Church is a sense of her *obligation to give*, and her *obligation to work*, for her Lord.

Fourthly, the difference between such a Committee and the Boards is seen in the directness of its relation to the Assembly, and in the simplicity of its action. A Committee is the very hand of the Assembly, and not the hand of its servant. A *Commission* is *the Assembly perpetuated*. It is the living body. The Church, acting through her General Assembly, or a Commission of the Assembly—which is the same thing—or, again, through a Committee of the Assembly, is like a man that uses his own limbs—limbs with which he was born, and which are *living legs*, forming part of his living body. But the Church acting through these Boards is like a man with a *cork leg*, fastened on by a strap and socket and buckle, which can never answer fully the purposes of a living limb.

If any one should insist that, nevertheless, the relation of Board and of Committee to the Assembly are of the same general kind, and if we were to grant this, I must still maintain that the complications attaching to the Board are unnecessary, and are, therefore, unlawful. I contend for this limitation of the powers of the Church as an essential principle. It is the legacy of our Puritan and our Covenanting Fathers. The Church cannot ordain unnecessary complications of agency amounting to the transfer of her work to *another body*.

My argument is finished, but I must notice some objections.

First, there is the presumption which exists against all change. Our brethren say we must not have "innovation." Sir, we propose no innovation—only a return to Bible principles and Bible practice. Our doctrine is as old as the New Testament, our plan as old as the Acts of the Apostles. Moreover, the Assembly has of late virtually decided that the principles for which I contend are the true develop-

ment of its life. At Nashville, some of the ablest men in the Church advocated a Board for Church Extension, but the idea of a Committee, though feebly advocated, prevailed. The Assembly decided against these complicated Boards, and took one step toward the simpler and directer organization which I advocate.

Secondly, it is urged, "Let well enough alone." Oh, sir, is it well enough? What do brethren mean? I am no accuser. I do not blame the Boards. They have done as well as they could with this stiff and cumbrous organization. But have they done "*well enough?*" Can any man say that this great Church, in any department of its work, is doing well enough? Oh, sir, when I think of eight hundred perishing millions abroad, and of the moral wastes of our own country, when I look at the power of the Gospel and the Master's blood to redeem and save, and then think how little progress has been made, I cannot say, "Let well enough alone." I must put it to my brethren, *Is it well enough?* I must urge this Church to inquire if she be not neglecting some power God has given her. She is capable of far higher and more glorious things, and I want her to put forth her own *living hand* directly to this work.

[Dr. THORNWELL closed with an earnest appeal to the Assembly to look carefully and prayerfully at this matter, expressing the belief that if the views of himself and of his brethren should prevail it would make a new era in our history. He drew (said the Philadelphia *Presbyterian*) a glowing picture of our future, and concluded with a fervent wish for its realization, with "amen and amen!" He closed (said the New York *Observer*) with a thrilling appeal that moved all hearts, holding the Assembly and the thronged galleries in breathless attention, while he summoned the whole host of God's elect to come up to the great work of giving the Gospel to a lost world.

In reply, Dr. CHARLES HODGE said:]

If the members of Assembly have been affected as I have been by the eloquence of Dr. Thornwell, their minds have undergone rapid and surprising changes. At one time they have felt that fundamental principles are at stake, that our practice has been always and radically wrong. Again, they must have felt that, after all, this is a mere difference of words, so fine, indeed, that I cannot see the difference; for, after all, what does it amount to? to what, indeed, has it come, when, to our inexpressible relief, he tells us that it is all comprehended in

the distinction between the Board of Missions and the Church Extension Committee? He thinks it a *radical* difference. I do not think it worth *that*. [Snapping his fingers.] If this were all, it would not be worth while to spend our time in the discussion.

But, sir, there have been so many things said which I think that many of this General Assembly cannot endorse, that I feel constrained to attempt a few remarks upon some of them. We cannot receive, and our Church has never held, the High Church doctrines about organization for which the brethren contend. The Spirit of God dwelling in the Church and guiding her by His Word and Providence, in our view, must shape her efforts and her agencies; and, under the dispensation of the Spirit, far more is left to the discretion of the brotherhood of faith than under the ancient economy. But now we are called upon to believe that a certain form of church-government and order, in all its details and with all its appliances for the evangelical work, is revealed in the Word, and that we are as much bound to receive this form as to receive the articles of faith—that *order* is as much a matter of revelation as *faith*. We *cannot* do it and we *will not* do it. The burden was too heavy for our fathers, and we cannot bear it. Dr. Smith gave us, yesterday, a history of our Boards and of their rise and progress, and in doing so has drawn largely on his imagination for his facts. He insisted that the principles and plans of their organization were derived from New England, and that Congregational influence gave form to the Boards. Brother Smith is a young man—at least not old enough to have personally witnessed the events that resulted in the formation of these Boards—or he never would have ventured to give the theory of their organization which he gave in his speech. He further asserts that their present form was adopted from motives of *expediency*, and under the influence of men who were of New England origin and opinions.

Sir, was ever statement more apocryphal? Can any man acquainted with the real facts believe the statement for one moment? Not at all. Was Ashbel Green a New England man? Was Jacob J. Janeway a New England man? Was William M. Engles a New England man? Was George Junkin a New England man? Was George Baxter a New England man? Were David Elliott, and Elisha P. Swift, and Walter Lowrie, and Samuel Miller, and the Breckinridges New England men? The whole theory adduced by the brother is historically absurd and preposterous. The truth is, this Church has, from her very origin, acted on the commission, "Go ye and preach my Gospel"—has always been a Missionary Church. She has, as a Church, sent forth the living Minister from her earliest history. It has been her fundamental principle that she was sent to spread the Gospel throughout the land in which her lot was cast, and to commit this work to

such of her faithful sons as she might choose. The Church, in her whole history, has acknowledged that this work was laid upon her. But it could not be done by the scattered members of the Church, widely dispersed over a new and extended country. The several congregations and Presbyteries were too sparsely spread out for frequent conference and co-operation; and yet they needed to employ combined effort that the strong might aid the weak. There was a necessity for a Committee or Board of the Assembly, and one was appointed; but from the apathy of the churches the work went slowly on, and voluntary associations sprung up all around, and, to a great extent, took the work, and the means of prosecuting it, out of the hands of the Church's Committee; and when the Church proposed to take this great work into her own hands, the friends of Voluntary Societies said the Church has no right to have Boards—she must not sully her hands with such work—her function is to supply the preachers; we will attend to the collecting of funds, and send them forth. And it cost a great struggle before the Church could obtain control of this work, so as to entrust it to the hands of a Board of her own creation and control. Thus, and from this quarter, did opposition to Boards first arise; now it comes from an opposite quarter. *Then* the opposition came from Congregationalism. Now it comes—I say it with great respect for my brother Thornwell—from hyper-hyper-hyper-High Church Presbyterianism. Then we were told that all power is from the people; now, that all power is lodged in the clergy, that Presbyters are all of one order, all Pastors, all Teachers, all Rulers: then it was the theory of the distribution of power; now, of centralization.

But let us look at this new theory of Church authority. Principles are often stated in debate without careful limitation, and I may not correctly apprehend the doctrine, but I understand it to be: 1. That Christ has ordained a system of church-government, not in general principles, but *in all its details*, and that we have no more right to create a new office than a new doctrine or a new commandment of the Decalogue, unless we can show a "thus saith the Lord" for it; 2. That power inheres in the Church, and cannot be delegated, any more than praying or giving alms can be done by proxy; and 3. That all power is *joint*, as opposed to *several*. These are the green withes by which it is proposed to bind the limbs of our Church; or rather, this is the Delilah who is to cut the locks of our Samson, and send him shorn of his strength to be the sport of the Philistines.

Now, sir, our Church never did receive this yoke, and she will not receive it. We believe that all the attributes of the Church belong to the Holy Ghost. He is to be her guide by His Word and Providence; and, under the general principles laid down for her guidance in the Holy Word, Ministers, Elders, and *people* are to do the work of the

Church, and to their best judgment. She *has discretion*, sir; she cannot be bound.

In opposition to this theory, I have been taught by lips now silent in the grave, but vocal in the General Assembly on high—and I will never forget it nor cease to defend it while life and being last—that all the attributes and prerogatives of power in the Church arise from the indwelling of the Spirit, and where He dwells there is the Church, with authority to do its own work in the best way; and as He does not dwell in the clergy exclusively, therefore the power is not confined to the clergy; but the Church may in her discretion adopt such modes or agencies to carry out the commands of Christ as she deems best. She must be free. She must breathe. The power of the Church is where the Holy Ghost is; but in externals He has given her *discretion*. I glory as much as does my brother Thornwell in the *principles* of Presbyterianism; they are the glory of the land, and are working for the salvation of the world; but one of those principles, and a most important one, is freedom in that which the Bible leaves to the discretion of Christ's people. We must not forget our great distinctive principles—1st, the parity of the clergy; 2dly, the representative element—the right of the people to take part, by suffrage, in the government of the Church; and that power, indeed, is originally deposited with the people; and, 3dly, the *unity* of the Church—that all its members are parts of one great whole, and that all must suffer and labour and rejoice together. And these are not compatible with the new theory. In reference to what I have regarded as the *High-Church theory*, I call attention to the fact that no Church on earth *has ever carried it out;* and it is an utter *impracticability*. Even the Pope and the High-Church Prelatists, in their practice, abandon it, and employ such agencies as may best suit their purpose. It is not only inconsistent with the practice of every Church, but especially with those of the Protestant branches. Luther had not this theory, nor even our theory of Presbyterianism; Calvin had it not; Zwingle had it not; nor Knox, nor any of the Reformers. The theory is emphatically no part of American Presbyterianism; it was never held by the Tennents, Smiths, Blairs, Alexanders and Millers of the Church. But, above all, the theory is utterly *unscriptural*. Let any man open the New Testament and say if our Form of Government is there as our *faith* is there? No, sir, this is making the scaffolding to hide the building; it is making the body the same in value as the soul. I cannot see how any man can say that all the details of our system are in the Bible. The Jewish system in its details was not in the Old Testament. Their yoke was not so heavy as that which these brethren would bind on our necks; and it is preposterous to expect that so heavy a yoke can be received by those whom Christ has made free. This is too great

a burden; the Church cannot receive it, and we will not receive it. Our Christian liberty is not thus to be put in trammels. The shackles are worse than Jewish that they would put on our feet, and then tell us to go over hill and dale and preach the Gospel to every creature. No, I do not find their system in the Bible, but I find just the opposite. Where are our Apostles and Prophets? Suppose, Moderator, that Paul, inspired by God as an Apostle, sat in your seat! What would he care for our Book of Discipline, or our Form of Government? Who would want him to care for them? He would ordain whom he pleased, depose whom he pleased, deliver to Satan whom he pleased. He would decide everything by the authority that he exercised as Christ's plenipotentiary. He would wait for no decisions of Assemblies.

This system, proposed by our brethren, cannot be carried out in our frontier settlements. Discretion must be allowed to our evangelists; they must have power to form churches and baptize; they cannot wait to have the whole of our system inaugurated before they can dispense ordinances. Deprive the Church of discretionary freedom to *adapt* her principles to the exigency of cases as they arise, and you tie her, hand and foot. The Church cannot submit to it; it will not submit to it. The Church must have freedom; and she cannot do her work, either at home or abroad, if you keep her thus hampered by a prescriptive system. Ask that venerable man (Hon. W. Lowrie) how this new theory would work in heathen lands. Presbyterianism cannot be at once introduced in all its parts amongst the heathen; the missionary must have liberty of discretion to preach and gather converts, and govern them as best he may until they are ready to receive the Church in its fuller organization. The converted heathen is a babe, unfit for the full responsibilities of a believer. Will you make Elders of infants? Bishops of babes? It cannot be done. There is no use of talking about it. The Missionary must be a man of sense, and he cannot commit such follies as this.

But this burden to the conscience—to it I will not submit. I will not be bound to a *form* of organism as I am to the *faith* of the Gospel. I will not submit my conscience to the *inferences*, even of Dr. Thornwell. And yet this whole theory, which we are called upon to receive as of faith, is a matter of *inference*. I will not submit to anything as binding on my conscience that does not come from God's own lips. The Presbyterian Church will never submit, as long as there is one drop of the blood of her fathers in the veins of her children, to this superlatively High-Church order. Will you have deaconesses because the Apostles had them?

And, finally, this theory is *suicidal*. How are you to have schools and colleges, and Theological Seminaries, if you must have a Divine

warrant for them all? You must abolish all agencies; recall your Missionaries; go yourself and do the work of an Evangelist. How are you to have a Board of Directors for a Seminary; or even a President of such a Board? How are the brethren able to serve under such Boards in their Seminaries? Can you find any warrant for them in this Bible? Dr. Thornwell may get it out by an inference, but I cannot find it there. And when he said that the Church Extension Committee is the model of what he wants, I felt as if a soaring angel had fallen down to earth.

If these principles of Dr. Thornwell's kill the Boards, they will kill the Committees which our brethren would substitute for the Boards. In fact, it is a mere question of arithmetic: a Board or a Committee—one hundred men or twenty men. And a Commission amounts to the same thing. A *Commission* and a *Committee!* Where the difference, in the word or the thing? No! no! this doctrine, carried out, instead of making the Church more efficient, will bring her efforts to a dead halt.

This conscientiousness, of which Dr. Thornwell so feelingly speaks, cannot be so serious a thing, after all, as my brother would make it. It is a long time since he began to advocate this theory, and to make its adoption a matter of conscience. Our brethren must have done violence to their consciences for a long time, for they still work with our Boards, and co-operate under a system which does such violence to their consciences!

But there is another ground of appeal of our brethren that ought to be noticed. They understand us to say that there is but a small difference between a Board and a Committee. If it is so small a matter, ask they, why cannot you give it up? We cannot give it up without casting reproach upon all that have gone before us; we cannot give it up without abandoning the past. We cannot give it up without yielding to pretensions that we believe to be unauthorized by Scripture. We cannot give it up without sacrificing our Christian liberty! And we will not give it up. The Church has freedom of discretion in selecting the modes of her operation; and to sacrifice this freedom to the claims of a high *jure divino* churchism, which we do not believe to be scriptural, we cannot and will not consent.

[In a rejoinder to Dr. HODGE'S remarks, Dr. THORNWELL said:]

I desire to say a few words in reply to my illustrious brother from Princeton. If my respected brother had written out a speech to deliver before the Assembly in opposition to my views, he could not possibly have written one which it would better suit me to answer than

the one delivered here on Saturday. He accepts the issues which are the true issues in this case, and has set before us the type of Presbyterianism of which the Boards may be regarded as the natural development. There is a little preliminary skirmishing, which it may be necessary to notice before coming to the main issue, and to that let us first attend.

Dr. Hodge has concluded, from my principles, that I *make the Clergy the Church.* I am amazed at the charge, but still more amazed at the logic which sustains it. I have paid some little attention to logic. I once wrote a book which that good brother criticised, in his Review, as having too much logic. I have studied[1] Aristotle and several other masters in the science, and have, probably, the largest collection of works on the subject to be found in any private library in the whole country. But in all my researches I never did meet any logic, before, so peculiar as that by which my distinguished brother has deduced from such premises such a charge as he has brought against me. It reminds me of the logic of the "Hard-shell" Baptist preacher in Alabama, who had announced that, on a given day, he would prove from the pulpit that, in due time, the whole country would become Baptists. Repudiating, as they all do, any previous selection of a text, and making conscience of opening the Bible in the pulpit and taking the first text upon which the eye may chance to rest, and trusting to the Spirit to aid in the exposition, this good brother happened on the text, "The voice of the turtle is heard in our land." It rather posed him at first, but he soon rallied, and said: "My brethren, you may think there is nothing in this text to prove what I have undertaken, but you will see before I am done. You know what turtles are. Go through the country, and you see hundreds lying on the logs, in the ponds, sunning themselves, and as you pass one after another they will 'PLUNGE' into the water. Now, a turtle is remarkable for its having no voice of any kind. It is perfectly dumb, and no man ever heard it emit any sound. But the text says, '*its voice* shall be heard in our land,' and, therefore, the text must refer to the sound it makes as it 'PLUNGES' into the water. And so the text clearly proves that, in our land, men are to take to the water and turn Baptist." The logic which proves me guilty of abetting a clerical despotism is about as conclusive as this.

Again, my brother has said that my principles are "hyper-*hyper*-HYPER-*High-Presbyterianism*," and I must retort that his principles are no, *no*, NO Presbyterianism, no, *no*, NO Churchism! His speech, sir, presented us with a little touch of Democracy, a little touch of Prelacy, and a considerable slice of Quakerism, but no Presbyterian-

[1] See the next article, p. 266, where this word is corrected by Dr. Thornwell.

ism. Surely, sir, Dr. Hodge's statement that the Church is found wherever the Holy Ghost is, cannot be taken without much qualification. Does not the Holy Ghost often dwell in the heart of the solitary individual? But the Church is an organism, uniting many individuals into one body.

Again, the good brother appeals *to authority* for sanction to his views of Boards. We can appeal to Fathers too. There have been martyrs who laid down their lives rather than deny the Divine right of Presbytery. The great author of the Second Book of Discipline, and many others of the glorious men of Scotland, held the views we now maintain. And we have living authorities, too—among whom is one who has no superior, and few equals, in either hemisphere—the great author of the Act and Testimony, the document that separated this Church from error, to whom all Presbyterians are, therefore, under everlasting obligations. But, Moderator, this question is not to be settled by human authority, but by the Word of God.

Again, my brother twits me with supporting the Boards while professing to be conscientiously opposed to the principles of their constitution. Would he have us to be factious? Moderator, I never have said to my brethren, to whom I promised submission in the Lord, "I cannot submit, I will not submit." I will submit to my brethren, even where I think they are mistaken, if the submission be not sinful.

The good brother complains that we wish to lay a heavier yoke than the Jewish upon his neck. The burden we want to impose is more grievous than he can bear—he must have liberty. Well, sir, what we bring him is, first, God's authority, and, secondly, God's guidance; and these constitute our notion of perfect freedom.

But it is charged that we regard the body too much, and the spirit too little. So far from this, what we contend for is the true spirit of the scheme of Missions and of the organization of the Church. What we prize is the soul of the Church, but of course a soul must do better in a body which suits it. The soul of a man could not act well through the body and organs of a hog, or of an elephant. The spirit of a man needs the body of a man, and so the spirit of the Church needs the true body and organism of the Church for its complete and perfect action.

The idea of the brother, that if Paul were here he would pay no regard to this church-court, but act independently of it, upon his own authority, filled me with astonishment. Paul surely would not despise order nor contemn the authority which his Divine Master has left in His Church. Sir, we claim to be a true apostolic Church. Paul is here. All the Apostles are here. We have the very principles they inculcated, and the very order they inaugurated; and would Paul contemn these?

But I made the good brother's remarks the occasion of consulting Paul on this very question before us, and I have his answer. He declares (Eph. iv. 11) that the Lord, as His ascension gifts, "gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers," and that "*God has set*" these in His Church, and "appointed helps and governments" for it.

But let us now pass to the main issue—the Presbyterianism of my brother from Princeton, and that which we hold to be the Presbyterianism of the Bible and of our Constitution. The good brother, in his account of Church Government, has not signalized one principal element of this Presbyterianism. He named: 1. *The parity of the clergy.* Why, sir, this is not a distinctive feature of *Presbyterian* Church Government. All the Evangelical sects, except the Episcopal, hold to that. 2. He named *the authority of the people.* Why, sir, that, also, is not distinctive of Presbyterianism. The Congregationalists hold that in intenser degree than we do. 3. The Doctor mentioned *the unity of the Church.* And is that peculiar to us? Why, Rome holds that with a vehemence we do not put forth! Such are the three points signalized by the brother as the main points of our system. Look at them, and see what they compose. Is that Presbyterianism—a little of everything, but nothing distinctive?

Sir, the principles which really distinguish us from other Evangelical Churches are:

1. The principle of representative government—of government by parliamentary courts, composed of Presbyters duly appointed and ordained. A single congregation is governed by the parochial Presbytery; several associated congregations by the classical Presbytery: the whole Church, by a Presbytery of representative Presbyters from all its bounds. This is the first element that distinguishes us from Congregationalists and from Prelatists—government not by individual rulers, but assemblies of Presbyters. Do we ignore the people, then? Far from it: the people are there representatively; they are there in Presbyters, all alike of their own choice.

2. The members of these representative assemblies must be of two classes, belonging to the one order of Presbyters. All of them belong to the one order of rulers, and *only as rulers*, chosen rulers, or representatives of the people, can they appear in these courts. But they are of two classes, viz.: (1.) Presbyters who only rule; and (2.) Presbyters who rule and also labour in the Word and doctrine. This gives us the second element of our representative government, and answers to the two houses which are found to be so excellent a help to wise and safe legislation.

Presbyterians, therefore, hold to the *parity of the Eldership*—not only, as Dr. Hodge seems to think, to the parity of the "Clergy,"

(that is, of the teaching Elders or Ministers), but, also, to the *parity of all Presbyters*, as Presbyters or Rulers of the Lord's house. I take my brother, the Ruling Elder, when I meet him in any church-court, by the hand as my brother and my *peer*. As Presbyters, as members of any Presbytery, from the lowest to the highest, we are all perfectly equal in authority, although some of us have another function or office, being ordained to labour also in the Word and doctrine. I may here refer to an article in the last number of the *Princeton Review* which goes to abolish and overthrow, altogether, the office of the Ruling Elder and this Presbyterian doctrine of the parity of all Presbyters.

3. A third distinctive feature of Presbyterian church-government is the way in which it realizes the unity of the Church. It realizes this idea by the *elasticity* of its Parliamentary Representative system. If there were but one congregation on earth, its Session would be the Parliament of the whole Church; if half a dozen, the representatives from each would constitute a Parliament for the whole Church; if a still larger number, the same results would follow. And representatives from all the churches (or from the smaller Parliaments, which is the same principle) constitute the Parliament for the whole Church.

Only two Churches on the earth realize this idea of Church unity—Rome and our own Church. But these are the poles apart as to the system by which they realize it. Rome, with her infallible Pope at the head, and with graded authorities extending over the whole earth, one class subservient to another, and all to the Pope, secures a terrible unity, binding all abjectly to a single throne. Our system, on the other hand, secures unity in consistency with the most perfect freedom.

Now look, brethren, at the Presbyterianism advocated by the brother from Princeton, and then at that which I have feebly attempted to portray—"look first on this picture, and then look on that," and say which of them is the Presbyterianism of the Bible, which is your Presbyterianism. Sir, methought, as the brother portrayed what he called the main principles of our system, the old Covenanters' blood which runs in the veins of my brother, your permanent Clerk, must have earnestly protested that that was not his Presbyterianism, nor the Presbyterianism of his fathers then in Scotland. I am happy, sir, in being able to say that the system enunciated in the speech of my brother is not the system taught by his colleague who has that department in the Seminary at Princeton.

[Dr. HODGE here interposed, with Dr. THORNWELL'S consent, and said that he was unwilling that the few undeveloped statements made by him should be held up, especially in a misapprehended form, as an *exposé* of his views. He

had elaborated his views upon that subject in a tract which his colleague (Dr. McGill) approved and used in his classes. He could not permit the impression to go forth, uncorrected, that he and his colleague held different views, nor that the delineation given by Dr. Thornwell was a correct delineation of his views.[1] "Moderator," said Dr. Hodge, "I can agree to every principle set forth by Dr. Thornwell here to-day." "Do you then mean, Dr. Hodge, to be understood (asked Dr. Thornwell) as saying that you hold the Ruling Elder to be a Presbyter?" "I will answer that question (said Dr. Hodge) if you will tell me whether you hold the Apostle to have been a Deacon." The Moderator interrupted this conversation by announcing that the hour of adjournment had arrived.

On the next day, the discussion being resumed, Dr. THORNWELL continued:]

I would disavow any intention of being discourteous, or of wounding the feelings of any brother, in the remarks of yesterday which produced the interruption. Without reiterating the points already made, I would merely refer to one more, which was neglected in the presentation yesterday of my view of the essentials of our Church Government. I allude to the power of the representative Assemblies of Rulers. It is simply ministerial and declarative. They cannot

[1] Subsequently, Dr. Krebs moved that Dr. McGill be invited by the Assembly (of which he was not a member) to define his position. The motion passed *nem. con.*

Dr. McGill expressed his thanks; stated that Dr. Thornwell *was authorized* to say that he agrees with him in his views of church-government—they are the views he teaches in the Seminary at Princeton. At the same time, he had no sympathy with the application of them made by Dr. Thornwell in regard to the activities of the Church. "I also substantially agree with Dr. Hodge, for I see very little difference between them. I go with Dr. Hodge and with Dr. Thornwell. I have but one remark with respect to any supposed diversity of opinion between my colleague and myself. I confess I read with deep regret an article in the last *Princeton Review* upon the Eldership. I cannot approve that article, and if Dr. Hodge does, *quoad hoc*, there is a diversity of opinion." Dr. McGill proceeded to express his kind feelings for Dr. Hodge, and his knowledge of the mutual respect and kind feelings entertained by Drs. Hodge and Thornwell for one another.

make laws for God's people; they only declare and administer the revealed laws of the Lord's house. They have a certain commission entrusted to them, and no power beyond that which is necessary to execute that commission. Now, the ground which I took in opposition to the present organization of our Boards was, that there was an exercise of power *beyond* what the Church is authorized to put forth in constituting a Society separate from the Church for Church purposes. The Board is a Missionary Society beyond the Church—outside of the Church—a distinct organism, and the Executive Committee is the hand of this Society, not the hand of the Church. Brethren mistake in saying that the *Board* is the executive agent of the Assembly; it is not. It is, in fact, not an executive agency at all. The Executive Committee is the hand of the Board, and the Board stands off as a Missionary Society, and to it the Executive Committee reports. Instead of creating a *hand*, and an executive agency of the Assembly, we created a *Society*, in imitation of the American Board or the American Home Missionary Society, and transferred to it the work of Missions. The Board is not expected to do anything but appoint the Executive Committee and receive its report, adopt it, and then report to the Assembly. Now, by a true construction of our system, the General Assembly *is* the Board of Domestic Missions. The Executive Committee ought to be the hand of the Assembly, and directly responsible to it. But this is not the case. Another organization—a Society whose members are not identical with the members of the Church, and whose officers are not church-officers—is interposed between the executive agency and the Assembly which ought to control. What, then, do you need? To abolish the Board and have the General Assembly act as the Board of Missions for the Church, or rather the Church act through the Assembly.

I want the idea to get out amongst our people, that *every member* of the Church is a member of a Board, not appointed by men, but by God Himself. I wish every Church member to feel that, by the fact of his being a member of the Church, he is a member of a Missionary Society, and that the privilege of membership is bought with Christ's blood, not with money, and that he owes the duty of a member. The Presbyterian Church IS A BOARD OF MISSIONS, OF EDUCATION, and of every other effort that the Church ought to undertake; and to lose sight of that idea, or hide it from the people, is to diminish in their minds the sense of responsibility to labour. It is clear, therefore, that to the extent to which we recognize the propriety of organizing Missionary Societies without the Church, we propagate the notion amongst our people that a man may be a Christian, and yet not a member of a Missionary Society; whereas, if you adopt our idea, which is certainly the scriptural one, they will feel that membership

in the Church is membership of a Missionary Society, and that to pray and give is a part of a member's duty. I care not for the name. Let it be called a *Board* or a *Committee*, no matter; but let it be the *hand of the Church*, to collect and disburse her benefactions, and do her work.

What has a Board ever done? You see from the Report of the Board it does nothing. Many of its members never attend. Many do not know they are members, and others do not care. Its meetings are mere matter of form, and the only effect is to make the members of the Board rely upon the Assembly for supervision, whilst the Assembly relies upon the Board, and supervision is defeated.

I desire to ask one or two questions:

1st. Do you believe that the Church will be more efficient in doing her work, with every member of the Church a member of all her Missionary schemes, and with the obligation to perform the duties of a member pressing on his conscience, than as things now are?

And, 2dly. Is it consistent with the dignity of the Church to be offering membership in her Boards, and certain honours supposed to be attached to it, for thirty or fifty dollars? Is it not humiliating?

You ask, Why make so much ado about so small a matter? It is not a matter of small importance. Moses was as particular to see to every pin of the tabernacle as to the more important points. No point that God saw proper to order could safely be neglected; and we cannot rightly esteem anything a small matter which God has directed us to employ.

I love simplicity. I love simplicity of organization. God's works are simple; the organization of His Church is sublimely simple; her worship is simple; and just as we seek after complexity of schemes we depart from His example. I want to see this Church placed in such a position that every member may consider himself a member of a Society, part of whose *worship* and whose *work* it is to spread the Gospel. I want to see the entire energies of this Church called out in the Master's service, and I want to get clear of every encumbrance that will retard her progress or embarrass her energies.

Let me say, in the last place, that great events turn upon small principles. The difference between a Board and a Committee of the Assembly may seem to be small, but it is immense. The one is a separate Society, the other the Church's own hand.

When you lay down the proposition that the Church is the Missionary agency, you make every Church member a member, and lay upon him the responsibility of doing his duty. Under our present organization we know that is not felt.

Moderator, I have now discharged, according to my ability, a solemn public duty. I have stood up for principles that I solemnly be-

lieve to be fundamental in our system, and of incalculable importance to the welfare and advancement of our glorious cause. I love the whole catholic Church; but I love the Presbyterian Church with a fervour and a devotion which I cannot utter, and I do desire to see her put in that position that I believe she must occupy in order to the accomplishment of her mission in pouring the blessings of peace and salvation upon our whole land and upon the nations. I want the Church to come up to this mission in her own proper organization, with her own assemblies, with her own officers, and in her own power, executing her commissions herself, without delegating to any outside organism those functions and duties to perform which is her highest glory. When they ask the people to contribute, let her ministers speak, not in the name of this Board or that Board, but in the name of Zion and her glorious King. Let them ever press the idea that it is not the cause of a Board of human creation, but of the blood-bought Church and her exalted Head.

[Dr. THORNWELL closed his long and able argument (said the Philadelphia *Presbyterian*) with one of those impressive apostrophes and earnest appeals which few men can equal; and although his argument may not have been deemed conclusive by some of his hearers, all felt that his utterances were as honest as they were earnest, and they left a profound impression upon every hearer. Subsequently Dr. THORNWELL presented, for himself and others, the following protest against the action of the Assembly with reference to the Boards. It was admitted to record; but afterward, upon the adoption of certain resolutions by the Assembly, Dr. THORNWELL said that, inasmuch as the resolutions adopted carried out so very considerably the needful re-organization of the Boards, he would for himself and others ask the Assembly's leave to withdraw the protest he had offered. Leave was granted amid subdued applause.]

PROTEST.

The undersigned beg leave to record their very respectful protest against the decision of the Assembly, touching the expediency of making organic changes in the constitution of the Board of Domestic Missions. Their reasons are as follows:

1. Said decision is understood by them to imply, that it is not expedient for the Church to conduct her Missions by a ministerial agency

directly related and immediately responsible to herself. One organic difference, as they apprehend the matter, between the present system of Boards and the scheme of Executive Committees is, that the Boards are not expected to do the work themselves; the election of a large proportion of those who compose them is intended to be simply a complimentary distinction, which imposes no obligation, and the bodies when organized are only designed to appoint and superintend the real Agents which do the work. The Board, therefore, seems to us to be an organization within the Church, occupying the place and exercising the powers which belong to her own judicatories.

2. We protest, in the next place, because the decision seems to imply that it is expedient to concede the right of sitting and deliberating, as honorary members of these bodies, for a pecuniary contribution. This strikes us as an organic feature of the present system.

3. We object, in the third place, to the principle which underlies the constitution of our Boards, to wit: that the specific grant of a power imposes no precise limitations upon the choice of instruments to execute it. The only things concerning the worship of God and government of the Church left to Christian prudence and discretion, according to our Confession of Faith, are "some circumstances common to human actions and societies." The legitimate construction of this principle, in the case before us, restricts the discretion of the Church, not only to the instrumentality which is most in harmony with her Divine organization, but to the instrumentality which is most direct, simple and efficient. As the Church cannot upon any conditions, under the plea of this discretion, employ outside associations as her ministers to do her work, no more can she, upon the same plea, create within her own bosom institutions analogous to them.

4. We apprehend, in the fourth place, that the effect of the vote will be to weaken the Church's impressions of the great fundamental truth that it is her duty, in her organized capacity, to do the work committed to her. We believe, indeed, that in respect to Domestic Missions, especially, every Presbytery is primarily responsible for the culture of the field included within its bounds, and should earnestly and vigorously undertake itself to carry on the work throughout the whole extent of its territory; and we hold that in the nature of things it is impossible for any central agency whatsoever to supervise this whole business throughout all our established Presbyteries. And we, therefore, apprehend that this vote will tend to hinder the successful prosecution of Domestic Missions in these Presbyteries, by encouraging them to remit their own proper and necessary duty to an agency, which, while it seems to supplant them, is moreover utterly unable, and must ever be utterly unable, to perform this work. But, at the same time, we believe that the General Assembly is the proper body to carry

on the Domestic Missionary enterprise in all our wide frontiers, now opening so rapidly to receive a teeming population, and that an executive agency of the Assembly is necessary for the conduct of this business; and, also, for the purpose of equalizing the abundance and the necessities of our established Presbyteries, that the weak may be assisted by the strong to overtake their Missionary work in their own bounds. And this work of the General Assembly, which is our highest court, and represents, by Divine authority, the whole Church, we hold to be committed to the Church, as such, to be done by her in her organized capacity, and not delegated by her to another body, that it may appoint the needful executive agency by which it is to be accomplished.

5. We protest, lastly, against this decision of the Assembly because it perpetuates a system which obviously does not enlist the sympathies of the Church, nor develop its energies, as is shewn by the comparative insignificance of its results. The receipts of last year from the churches were only some $83,000, while our Church numbers about 300,000 members! It seems to us that, seeing we have for more than a quarter of a century been operating upon the present plans, with no adequate response from year to year during all this period by the churches to the demands of this sacred cause, it is high time for us to conclude that our operations fail to touch the springs of the Church's life and activity, and that some changes in the arrangements of our machinery are both necessary and expedient.

In brief, we hold that the Church is required to conduct the work of Missions; that she is limited in her discretion to the appointment of strictly executive agencies; that these Agents must be directly responsible to herself; and that any organization which she may institute not in harmony with these principles must prove inefficient, and cannot be expedient, because not agreeable to Scripture. Our vote, and this protest, are intended to record our adherence to these principles. If, on the other hand, the decision in question is not liable to the objections which we have mentioned, as having been really based on a different interpretation from ours of the ambiguous words "organic changes;" and if our brethren, in voting against "organic changes," only intended to signify that the Assembly must continue to act through organs of some kind, and not directly in its capacity of a Court, then we have no objection to the decision against which we have protested. Our brethren of the majority may still agree with us that changes are desirable, only they would call these changes "*modifications*," and not "*organic changes.*" Thus interpreted, there is, obviously, nothing in the decision of the Assembly to the prejudice of efforts to improve our system.

CHURCH-BOARDS AND PRESBYTERIANISM.

WHEN Milo was prosecuted for the murder of Clodius, Cicero appeared as his counsel, but the great orator was so intimidated by the turbulence of the crowd and the array of soldiers whom Pompey had introduced into the forum, that his presence of mind forsook him, and instead of the splendid defence which was expected from him he made a miserable and disgraceful failure. His unfortunate client was condemned and sent into exile. Partly to soothe his wounded vanity, and partly as a token of sympathy with his friend, Cicero subsequently wrote out and transmitted to Milo the oration which he ought to have delivered, and which Milo congratulated himself was not delivered, as it would probably have saved him from banishment, and deprived him of the luxury of the luscious fish he was then enjoying at Marseilles.

Dr. Hodge, of course, was not intimidated in the last Assembly by any of the circumstances which frightened the Roman orator, and yet he certainly failed, as signally as Cicero, to deliver the kind of speech which was expected from him. Conscious of the fact, upon his return home he retires to his study, reviews his ground, undertakes to retrieve his misfortunes, and the result is the article before us; which may, therefore, be accepted as a revised edition of the speech which he ought to have delivered. It is something worse than an effusion of mortification. It has the marks of a spiteful ebullition of resentment. Its distortions of our opinions are so persistent and perverse, that charity itself can hardly be persuaded that they are not wilful; and the personal insinuations are so ungenerous that it is impos-

sible to attribute them to accident. The want of candour and of manly fairness is so conspicuous that we hesitated, for a time, whether we ought to take any notice of an antagonist who seemed to hold himself free from the most sacred obligations of refined and honourable controversy. We confess that the article gave us great pain. We have been the more wounded because we have been taken by surprise. As soon as we had reason to believe that we had said anything in the last Assembly personally offensive to Dr. Hodge we made a public and cordial explanation. We were under the impression that our explanation had been accepted. We bade him farewell with nothing but feelings of personal kindness in our heart. During our absence from the country, we had occasion to pay more than one tribute to his worth as a scholar, a teacher and a divine, and we did it warmly and earnestly. We had no suspicion of the state of things in relation to ourselves that existed in his mind. It never entered our heads that while we were contributing to his great reputation, and *deservedly great* reputation, abroad, we were the object of little passions and resentments in his breast at home, which, we think, reflect no honour upon the magnanimity of the man, to say nothing of the generosity of the Christian. In our estimate of the *animus* of this article, we have not relied upon our own judgment. We have been fortified by the opinions of brethren whose judgment we respect, some in this, and others in distant States, and they have all concurred in representing it as bearing upon its face the marks of having been prompted by wounded pride and personal resentment.

However our personal relations to Dr. Hodge may be affected, nothing shall tempt us to do injustice to his real excellence. He *is* a scholar, "aye, a ripe and a good one," a critic and an expositor of pre-eminent abilities. His commentaries are an honour to the Church and to the country. In the departments suited to his genius he has no superior. But there are departments to which he is not adapted. Whether it be that Dr. Hodge has never been a Pastor, and

knows little of the actual working of our system, or whether his mind is of an order that refuses to deal with the practical and concrete, it so happens that he has never touched the questions connected with the nature and organization of the Church without being singularly unhappy. It would be invidious to mention illustrations. The article before us will furnish proof without going beyond it.

In replying to it, we shall reduce our remarks to two general heads: I. Strictures upon Dr. Hodge's representation of the debate in the last Assembly; and, II. An examination of his revised theory of Presbyterianism.

I. Under the first head we shall consider three things: 1. His statement of the precise point at issue; 2. His charge that, in the conduct of the debate, we evaded the issue; and, 3. His review of our objections to the theory of Presbyterianism which he broached in the Assembly.

1. As to the precise point at issue, Dr. Hodge is mistaken in supposing that we denied absolutely *all* discretion to the Church. We contended that, as a positive institution, with a written charter, she is confined to the express or implied teachings of the Word of God, the standard of her authority and rights; that, as in the sphere of doctrine she has no opinions, but a faith, so, in the sphere of practice, she has no expedients, but a law. Her power is solely ministerial and declarative. Her whole duty is to believe and obey. We, of course, insisted, in conformity with this view, that whatever is not commanded, expressly or implicitly, is unlawful. We repudiated the doctrine that whatever is not forbidden is allowable. According to our view, the law of the Church is the positive one of conformity with Scripture; according to the view which we condemned, it is the negative one of non-contradiction to Scripture. According to us, the Church, before she can move, must not only show that she is not prohibited; she must also show that she is actually commanded—she must produce a warrant. Hence, we absolutely denied that she has any discretion in relation to things not commanded. She can proclaim no laws that

Christ has not ordained, institute no ceremonies which He has not appointed, create no offices which He has not prescribed, and exact no obedience which He has not enjoined. She does not enter the wide domain which He has left indifferent, and by her authority bind the conscience where He has left it free.

But does it follow from this that she has absolutely no discretion at all? On the contrary, we distinctly and repeatedly asserted, that in the sphere of commanded things she *has* a discretion—a discretion determined by the nature of the actions, and by the Divine principle that all things be done decently, in order. This assertion is found in the report of our speech on page 362 of the number of this journal for July, 1860.[1] It is implied in the report of the same speech in the Princeton Review of the same month. It is wrong, therefore, to say that we excluded "*all discretionary power*" in the Church. We only limited and defined it. We never denied that the Church has a right to fix the hours of public worship, the times and places of the meeting of her courts, the numbers of which they shall be composed, and the territories which each shall embrace. Our doctrine was precisely that of the Westminster Standards, of John Calvin, of John Owen, of the Free Church of Scotland, and of the noble army of Puritan martyrs and confessors. "The whole counsel of God," say the Westminster divines, "concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or by traditions of men."[2] This is clearly our doctrine of the law of positive conformity with Scripture as the measure of the Church's duty. Again: "God alone is lord of the conscience, and hath left us free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to His Word, *or beside it*, in matters of

[1] Page 219 of this volume. [2] Confession of Faith, ch. i., sec. 6.

faith or worship."[1] Here we are clearly taught that the silence of Scripture is as real a prohibition as a positive injunction to abstain. Where God has not commanded, the Church has no jurisdiction. Now, as to the real nature of her discretion: "Nevertheless," says this venerable Formulary, in continuation of the section from which our first extract has been taken, "nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word; and *there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.*" Here the discretion is limited to *some circumstances*, and those *common to human actions and societies.* Now, the question arises, What is the nature of these circumstances? A glance at the proof-texts on which the doctrine relies enables us to answer. Circumstances are those concomitants of an action without which it either cannot be done at all, or cannot be done with decency and decorum. Public worship, for example, requires public assemblies, and in public assemblies people must appear in some costume, and assume some posture. Whether they shall shock common sentiment in their attire, or conform to common practice; whether they shall stand, sit, or lie, or whether each shall be at liberty to determine his own attitude—these are circumstances: they are necessary concomitants of the action, and the Church is at liberty to regulate them. Public assemblies, moreover, cannot be held without fixing the time and place of meeting: these, too, are circumstances which the Church is at liberty to regulate. Parliamentary assemblies cannot transact their business with efficiency and dispatch—indeed, cannot transact it decently at all—without Committees. Committees, therefore, are circumstances common to parliamentary societies, which the Church, in her

[1] Confession of Faith, ch. xx., sec. 2.

parliaments, is at liberty to appoint. All the details of our government in relation to the distribution of courts, the number necessary to constitute a quorum, the times of their meeting, the manner in which they shall be opened,—all these, and such like, are circumstances, which, therefore, the Church has a perfect right to arrange. We must carefully distinguish between those circumstances which attend actions *as actions*—that is, without which the actions could not be—and those circumstances which, though not essential, are added as appendages. These last do not fall within the jurisdiction of the Church. She has no right to appoint them. They are circumstances in the sense that they do not belong to the substance of the act. They are not circumstances in the sense that they so surround it that they cannot be separated from it. A liturgy is a circumstance of this kind; as also the sign of the cross in baptism, and bowing at the name of Jesus. Owen notes the distinction.[1]

Calvin's view of the nature and limitations of the discretion of the Church is exactly the same as that of the Westminster standards.[2]

"We have, therefore," says Calvin, "a most excellent and sure mark to distinguish between these impious constitutions (by which, as we have said, true religion is overthrown and conscience subverted) and the legitimate observances of the Church, if we remember that one of two things, or both together, are always intended, viz., that in the sacred Assembly of the faithful, all things may be done decently, and with becoming dignity; and that human society may be maintained in order by certain bonds, as it were, of moderation and humanity."

After explaining what he means by decency and order Calvin proceeds to say:

"As there is here a danger, on the one hand, lest false bishops should thence derive a pretext for their impious and tyrannical laws, and on the other, lest some, too apt to take alarm, should from fear of the above evil leave no place for laws, however holy, it may here be proper to declare, that I approve of those human constitutions

[1] Vol. xix., p. 437. [2] Inst. IV., x., 28–30.

only which are founded on the authority of God, and derived from Scripture, and are, therefore, altogether Divine. Let us take, for example, the bending of the knee which is made in public prayer. It is asked whether this is a human tradition, which any one is at liberty to repudiate or reject? I say that it is human, and that at the same time it is Divine. It is of God, inasmuch as it is a part of that decency, the care and observance of which is recommended by the Apostles; and it is of men, inasmuch as it especially determines what was indicated in general, rather than expounded. From this one example, we may judge what is to be thought of the whole class, viz., that the whole sum of righteousness, and all the parts of Divine worship, and everything necessary to salvation, the Lord has faithfully comprehended and clearly unfolded in His oracles, so that in them He alone is the only Master to be heard. But as in external discipline and ceremonies He has not been pleased to prescribe every particular that we ought to observe (He foresaw that this depended on the nature of the times, and that one form would not suit all ages), in them we must have recourse to the general rules which He has given, employing them to test whatever the necessity of the Church may require to be enjoined for order and decency."

The notion of Calvin and our Confession of Faith, in other words, is briefly this: In public worship, indeed in all commanded external actions, there are two elements—a fixed and a variable. The fixed element, involving the essence of the thing, is beyond the discretion of the Church. The variable, involving only the *circumstances* of the action, its separable accidents, may be changed, modified, or altered, according to the exigencies of the case. The rules of social intercourse and of grave assemblies in different countries vary. The Church accommodates her arrangements so as not to revolt the public sense of propriety. Where people recline at their meals, she would administer the Lord's Supper to communicants in a reclining attitude. Where they sit, she would change the mode.

Dr. Cunningham, the noble principal of the Free Church College at Edinburgh, and one of the first divines of Europe, has not scrupled, amid the light of the nineteenth century, to teach the same doctrine:

"Of the views generally held by the Reformers on the subject of

the organization of the Church, there are two which have been always very offensive to men of a loose and latitudinarian tendency, viz., the alleged unlawfulness of introducing into the worship and government of the Church anything which is not positively warranted by Scripture, and the permanent, binding obligation of a particular form of church-government. The second of these principles may be regarded, in one aspect of it, as comprehended in the first. But it may be proper to make a few observations upon them separately, in the order in which they have now been stated.

"The Lutheran and Anglican sections of the Reformers held a somewhat looser view upon these subjects than was approved of by Calvin. They generally held that the Church might warrantably introduce innovations into its government and worship, which might seem fitted to be useful, provided it could not be shown that there was anything in Scripture which expressly prohibited or discountenanced them, thus laying the *onus probandi*, in so far as Scripture is concerned, upon those who opposed the introduction of innovations. The Calvinistic section of the Reformers, following their great master, adopted a stricter rule, and were of opinion that there were sufficiently plain indications in Scripture itself, that it was Christ's mind and will that nothing should be introduced into the government and worship of the Church, unless a positive warrant for it could be found in Scripture. This principle was adopted and acted upon by the English Puritans and the Scottish Presbyterians; and we are persuaded that it is the only true and safe principle applicable to this matter.

"The principle is, in a sense, a very wide and sweeping one. But it is purely prohibitory or exclusive; and the practical effect of it, if it were fully carried out, would just be to leave the Church in the condition in which it was left by the Apostles, in so far as we have any means of information; a result, surely, which need not be very alarming, except to those who think that they themselves have very superior powers for improving and adorning the Church by their inventions. The principle ought to be understood in a common-sense way, and we ought to be satisfied with reasonable evidence of its truth. Those who dislike this principle, from whatever cause, usually try to run us into difficulties by putting a very stringent construction upon it, and thereby giving it an appearance of absurdity, or by demanding an unreasonable amount of evidence to establish it. The principle must be interpreted and explained in the exercise of common sense. One obvious modification of it is suggested in the first chapter of the Westminster Confession, where it is acknowledged 'that there are some circumstances, concerning the worship of God and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be

ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed.' But even this distinction between things and circumstances cannot always be applied very certainly; that is, cases have occurred in which there might be room for a difference of opinion, whether a proposed regulation or arrangement was a distinct thing in the way of innovation, or merely a circumstance attaching to an authorized thing, and requiring to be regulated. Difficulties and differences of opinions may arise about details, even when sound judgment and good sense are brought to bear upon the interpretation and application of the principles; but this affords no ground for denying or doubting the truth or soundness of the principle itself." [1]

These citations are sufficient to show that the doctrine which we advocated in the General Assembly, touching the power and discretion of the Church, so far from being "a peculiar theory of Presbyterianism," is the doctrine of our Standards, the doctrine of the prince of the Reformers, and the doctrine of the soundest exponents of Presbyterianism across the water. If we have erred, we have no reason to be ashamed of our company.

Now, what is the counter doctrine of Dr. Hodge? He holds that, beyond the positive injunctions of Scripture, the Church has a wide discretion, determined only by its positive prohibitions; that the rules of Scripture are general and regulative, and not constitutive and prescriptive; that, consequently, the Church is not restricted to any one mode of organization, but may change her forms according to the exigencies of times and circumstances. "There are fixed laws assigned by God, according to which all healthful and normal development of the body is regulated. So it is with regard to the Church. There are fixed laws in the Bible, according to which all healthful development and action of the external Church are determined. But, as within the limits of the laws which control the development of the human body there is endless diversity among different races, adapting them to different climes and modes of living, so also in the Church. It is not tied down to one particular

[1] The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation, pp. 31, 32.

mode of organization and action, at all times and under all circumstances."[1] So long as the Church keeps within the limits of these general laws, she may create new offices, erect new courts, and ordain new organs and organizations, at pleasure. The limit of her discretion is the principle of non-contradiction to Scripture. She is not bound to produce a warrant—a "thus saith the Lord," for all she does. Nay, more, she has a right to delegate her powers. She is not obliged to exercise them "through officers and organs prescribed in the Scriptures." She is competent, if she chooses, to appoint a vicar; the opposite doctrine being an element of a "peculiar theory of Presbyterianism." These are astounding pretensions; they carry in their bosoms the deadly tyranny of Prelacy and Popery. Dr. Hodge maintains the very same principles—only a little more extravagantly—which were maintained by Hooker, in the third book of the Ecclesiastical Polity; and he parades the same objections against us which Hooker paraded against the Puritans of his day. We want the reader distinctly to apprehend the point at issue. It is not, as Dr. Hodge represents it, whether the Church has *any* discretion—that is conceded on both sides—but, What is the measure or limit of that discretion? We hold it to be the *circumstances* connected with commanded duties, and hence affirm that whatever is not enjoined is prohibited. He holds that it pertains to actions themselves, and maintains that whatever is not prohibited is lawful. We make the Church a ministerial agent, he a confidential agent, of God. We hold that her organization is given; he holds that her organization is developed. He holds that any system which shall realize the parity of the clergy, the rights of the people, and the unity of the Church, is a *jure divino* government; we hold that, if these principles are realized in any other way except through Presbyters and Presbyteries, the government is not scriptural. It is not our purpose to argue the question

[1] Princeton Review for July, 1860, p. 552, and Appendix B to this volume, p. 620.

here; we only propose to put the matter in dispute in a clear light.

There are two sophistical illusions, however, in relation to this subject, which it is due to truth that we should dispel. It is commonly said that the essential principles of church-government are laid down in the Scriptures, but not the details: these are left to human prudence and discretion. The sentence is ambiguous. General principles are of two sorts—regulative and constitutive. Regulative principles define only ends to be aimed at, or conditions to be observed; constitutive principles determine the concrete forms in which the ends are to be realized. Regulative, express the spirit, constitutive, the form, of a government. It is a regulative principle, for example, that all governments should seek the good of their subjects; it is a constitutive principle that power should be lodged in the hands of such and such officers, and dispensed by such and such courts. Regulative principles define nothing as to the mode of their own exemplification; constitutive principles determine the elements of an actual polity. When, therefore, it is said that only the general principles of church-government are laid down in the Scripture, and not the details, if the allusion is to constitutive principles, the sentence is perfectly just—it conveys precisely the truth. The essential principles, in that case, mean nothing more nor less than the positive prescriptions of Scripture in relation to the office-bearers and the courts of the Church; the details mean those circumstances, common to human actions and societies, which it is confessedly within the province of the Church to regulate. If the allusion is to regulative principles, which prescribe the end without condescending to the means, which convey nothing definite as to the mode of concrete realization, then the proposition is certainly false; the Scriptures descend to what, in that case, would have to be considered as details. We signalize the ambiguity, in order that our readers may not be deceived by words. Dr. Hodge means by *general principles* regulative

laws; Presbyterian writers, generally, mean what we have called constitutive principles. The circumstance, therefore, that any one limits the teaching of Scripture as to church-government to general principles, to the exclusion of details, is no presumption that he agrees with Dr. Hodge. We have often done it, and expect often to do it again; but we always mean by general principles those which are constitutive and prescriptive. We believe that the New Testament has put the permanent government of the Church in the hands of Presbyters, and of Presbyters alone, and that she has no power to create any other spiritual office: this is one general principle—prescriptive, and not simply regulative. We believe that the New Testament requires these Presbyters to constitute parliamentary assemblies, and that the power of rule is lodged in these courts; this is another general principle—also prescriptive, and not regulative; and the Church has no right to ordain any other spiritual court but a Presbytery. But when it comes to the actual constitution of these courts, the number of Presbyters that shall compose them, the territories embraced in their jurisdiction, the times and places of their meeting—these are details, circumstances without which the existence and action of the courts become impossible; and, as circumstances inseparable from the commanded duties, they are discretionary. Hence, this form of expression creates no manner of presumption against the doctrine which we have maintained. Upon Dr. Hodge's theory, we can have other spiritual officers beside those specifically designated in Scripture; we can have other courts beside those composed exclusively of Presbyters. As long as we do not violate the equality of the clergy, nor exclude the people, nor break the unity of the Church, we may organize as largely and as freely as the times may seem to demand.

The other illusion is, that our doctrine reduces the Church to something like Jewish bondage. Dr. Hodge affirms that "it makes the Gospel dispensation, designed for the whole world, more restricted and slavish than the Jewish, although

it was designed for only one nation, and for a limited period."[1] Other speakers in the Assembly indulged in the same idle declamation. The simple question is, What was the bondage of the Jewish dispensation? Did it consist in the subjection of the people to the Divine will? Was that their grievous and intolerable burden, that they were bound in all things to regulate their worship by the Divine Word? Is God's authority a yoke so heavy that we sigh until we can throw it off? One would think that it was the great advantage of the Jews, that they knew their worship was acceptable because it was prescribed. Moses evidently regarded it as a singular favour, that the Lord was nigh to them, and directed them in all their ways. He knew nothing of that freedom which counts every man a slave who is not permitted to walk in the light of his own eyes, and after the imagination of his own heart. Jewish bondage did not consist in the principle, that the positive revelation of God was the measure of duty—that was its light and its glory—but in the *nature of the things enjoined.* It was the minuteness and technicality of the ritual, the cumbrous routine of services, the endless rites and ceremonies—these constituted the yoke from which Christ delivered His people. He did not emancipate us from the guidance and authority of God; He did not legitimate any species of will-worship; but He prescribed a worship simple and unpretending, a worship in spirit and in truth. God's will is as much our law and our glory as it was to the Jews; but God's will now terminates upon easy and delightful services. Those who contend that all things must be done by a Divine warrant can be charged with putting a yoke upon the necks of Christian people only upon the supposition, that the worship commanded in the Gospel is analogous to the worship of the law. The truth is, that the only worship which approaches to bondage is among those who hold the principle of Dr. Hodge. Prelacy and

[1] Princeton Review for July, 1860, p. 518. Appendix B to this volume.

Popery have their ritual and their ceremonies: but Puritans, the world over, have been conspicuous for the simplicity of their forms. They have stood fast in the freedom wherewith Christ hath made them free, and have cheerfully gone to the gibbet and the stake rather than be entangled again in a yoke of ceremonial bondage.

Before we close this part of the subject, there is one statement of Dr. Hodge, in relation to the Puritans, so extraordinary that we must advert to it for a moment:

"Dr. Thornwell told us that the Puritans rebelled against the doctrine that what is not forbidden in Scripture is allowable. It was against the theory of liberty of discretion, he said, our fathers raised their voices and their arms. We always had a different idea of the matter. We supposed that it was in resistance to this very doctrine of inferences they poured out their blood like water."[1]

When we first read this remarkable passage, we rubbed our eyes, and thought we must be mistaken. It is so flagrantly untrue that we cannot imagine how Dr. Hodge has been deceived. We have not been able to lay our hands upon a single Puritan Confession of Faith which does not explicitly teach that necessary inferences from Scripture are of equal authority with its express statements; nor have we found a single Puritan writer, having occasion to allude to the subject, who has not explicitly taught the same thing. The *principle* of *inference* they have unanimously affirmed. Our own Confession of Faith—and surely that is a Puritan document—does it, in a passage already cited. "The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, *is either expressly set down in Scripture, or, by good and necessary consequence, may be deduced from Scripture.*" Without going into a paroxysm of quotations upon so plain a point, we shall content ourselves with a short extract from Neal, which shows that Dr. Hodge is not only in error as to this matter, but as to several others pertaining to these illustrious men.

[1] Princeton Review for July, 1860, p. 666, and Appendix B to this volume, p. 632.

"It was agreed," says the historian, in contrasting the court reformers and the Puritans, "it was agreed by all that the Holy Scriptures are a perfect rule of faith; but the bishops and court reformers did not allow them a standard of discipline or church-government, but affirmed that our Saviour and His Apostles left it to the discretion of the civil magistrate, in those places where Christianity should obtain, to accommodate the government of the Church to the policy of the State. But the Puritans apprehended the Holy Scriptures to be a standard of church-discipline as well as doctrine; at least, that nothing should be imposed as necessary but what was expressly contained in or derived from them by necessary consequence. . . . . The Puritans were for keeping close to the Scriptures in the main principles of church-government, and for admitting no church-officers and ordinances but such as are appointed therein." [1]

As to the Scotch Reformers, Hetherington[2] emphatically testifies:

"Regarding the Sacred Scriptures as the supreme authority in all matters pertaining to religion, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Head and King of the Church, the Scottish Reformers deemed it reasonable to expect in the code of laws given by their Divine King enough to guide them in everything relating to His kingdom. But, while they were men of undoubting faith, they were also men of strong intellect. Faith directed them to the Word of God, as their only and all-sufficient rule; but that Word bade them in understanding be men. They dared, therefore, to conclude that Divine authority might be rightfully claimed, not only for the direct statements contained in the Scriptures, but also for whatsoever could be deduced from Scripture by just and necessary inference. Taking Scripture truths as axiomatic principles and admitted premises, they boldly and manfully exercised their reason in tracing out the consequences involved in and flowing from these truths."

It is true that the Puritans discarded the kind of inferences which Dr. Hodge has mentioned. But the discarding of a false inference, and the discarding of the principle of inference, are two very different things. The best principles may be perversely applied. They discarded, also, Pelagian and Arminian interpretations of Scripture. Does it follow that they discarded the principle of interpreting Scripture at all? Because they denied that the command

[1] Hist. Puritans, vol. i., pp. 101, 102, Tegg's Ed., London, 1837.
[2] Hist. Ch. Scotland, vol. i., p. 15, Edin. Ed., 1848.

to be subject unto the higher powers taught the doctrine of passive obedience, does it follow that they also denied that the immateriality of God could be rightly inferred from the spirituality? It was only false inferences that they rejected, as they rejected, also, false interpretations; but legitimate inferences were as valid as legitimate expositions. But how were men to judge of the soundness of an inference? Exactly as they judged of the soundness of an interpretation. Both were functions of the reason, enlightened by the Holy Ghost: men might err in either case, and in both they might reach the truth.

Dr. Hodge tells us, further, that the Puritans resisted the corruptions of worship introduced by the Prelatists, on the ground that these corruptions rested only on inferences. History tells us that they resisted on the ground that they were not commanded in Scripture, and could not, therefore, be enjoined by any human authority. "The principle"—we use the words of Neal[1]—"upon which the Bishops justified their severities against the Puritans, was the subjects' obligation to obey the laws of their country in all things indifferent, which are neither commanded nor forbidden by the law of God."

Dr. Hodge waxes warm and valiant as he contemplates the dangers of the doctrine of inferences. Dungeons and racks rise before his troubled imagination, and he is prepared to die like a hero, rather than yield an inch to the implied authority of God. "It was fetters forged from inferences our fathers broke, and we, their children, will never suffer them to be rewelded. There is as much difference between this extreme doctrine of Divine right, this idea that everything is forbidden which is not commanded, as there is between this free and exultant Church of ours and the mummied forms of mediæval Christianity." This is really spirited; the only thing which it lacks is sense. The idea, that if the Church is restricted exclusively to the Divine Word and to necessary deductions from it, if she is

[1] Hist. Pur., vol. i., p. 103.

made a ministerial and not a confidential agent of God, she will become a tyrant and an oppressor, is so preposterously absurd, that a statement of the proposition is a sufficient refutation. Is the law of God tyranny? And does man become a slave by being bound to obey it? Is not obedience to God the very essence of liberty, and is not the Church most divinely free when she most perfectly fulfils His will? What is it that has made this "free, exultant Church of ours," but the sublime determination to hear no voice but the voice of the Master? And what made the mummied forms of mediæval Christianity, but the very principle of the Princeton Doctor, that the Church has a large discretion? She claimed the right to command where God had not spoken; she made void His law, and substituted her own authority and inventions. We love freedom as dearly as Dr. Hodge does; and it is because we love the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, that we renounce and abhor the detestable principle of Prelatists, Popes and loose Presbyterians, that whatever is not forbidden is lawful. The Church may be very wise, but God is wiser.

Dr. Hodge's imagination is haunted with the vision of swarms of inferences, like the locusts of Egypt, darkening and destroying the prosperity of the Church, if the principle of inference is allowed at all. But who is to make these inferences, and who has authority to bind them upon the conscience of the people? We have no Prelates, no Pope. We acknowledge no authority but the authority of God, sealed to our consciences by His own Spirit, speaking through His own Word, and dispensed through officers whom we have freely chosen. Who is to impose inferences which the Christian understanding repudiates? The Church, as a whole, must accept them before they can have the force of law, and if there is tyranny the people are their own tyrants. Precisely the same kind of sophistry may be employed against all creeds and confessions. If we cannot *reason* from the Word of God without trespassing upon

freedom of conscience, we cannot expound it. The instrument which we employ in both cases is the same, and he that begins with denying the authority of legitimate inferences cannot stop short of renouncing all creeds.

Although our design has not been to argue the point in dispute betwixt Dr. Hodge and ourselves, yet we think that enough has been said, not only to indicate what that point really is, but what are also the *fontes solutionum.* We have marked the fallacies to which the Doctor has resorted, exposed the blunders into which he has fallen, and vindicated ourselves from the charge of being out of harmony with the great teachers of Presbyterian and Puritan Theology. We stand upon the principle that whatsoever is not commanded is forbidden. The Church, like the Government of the United States, is a positive institution, with positive grants of power, and whatever is not given is *withheld.*

The question concerning limits to the discretionary power of the Church is the pivot upon which the question concerning the lawfulness of the Boards revolves. If she is restricted to the circumstantials of commanded things, she must be able to show that Boards belong to this category, being evidently not commanded things themselves; or, she must renounce the right to appoint them. Committees are obviously lawful, because they are circumstances common to all parliamentary bodies, and indispensable to their orderly and efficient conduct of business.

2. We come now to notice the charge of Dr. Hodge, that, in our reply to him, in the last Assembly, we evaded the only point which was properly at issue, and confined ourselves almost exclusively to attempting to prove that the brother from Princeton was no Presbyterian. It is a pity that we suffered our souls to be vexed about so personal a matter. The brother himself has saved us the trouble of any future concern. The article before us contains his matured opinions, and, as we shall soon have occasion to show, if he had written it for the express purpose of revolutionizing the Church, he could not more completely have con-

tradicted her Standards without renouncing the very name Presbyterian. But to the point immediately in hand. Our reply, as to aim and purpose, was precisely what it should have been, according to the rules of fair and honourable debate. It will be remembered that, in our opening speech, we had distinctly asserted that the question concerning the lawfulness of Boards resolved itself into another question, concerning the nature and organization of the Church—that the differences of opinion upon the one subject were only reflections of analogous differences upon the other. We proceeded to indicate two types of opinion in regard to the constitution of the Church which we had reason to believe prevailed. According to one type, which we characterized as a strictly *jure divino* theory, God has given us a government as truly as He has given us a doctrine. He has left nothing to human discretion but the circumstantials—the things common to human actions and societies. According to the other, He has ordained government in general, but no one government in particular. He has laid down the laws —the regulative principles—by which a government must be organized; but He has left it to human wisdom to make the organization, by determining the elements and the mode of their combination. This class gives a large margin to the discretion of the Church. As the question concerning Boards is a question concerning the discretion of the Church, and as the question concerning the discretion of the Church is a question concerning the nature of her organization, the debate was obliged to turn upon the true theory of church-government. That became the first issue. Dr. Hodge, in his speech, accepted this issue, and accordingly levelled his batteries against our *jus divinum* scheme. He knew that if he could overthrow that, all went with it. In contrast, he developed his own scheme, a scheme upon which the Boards were perfectly defensible. In reply, we undertook to demolish his scheme, and to illustrate the superiority of our own. Where was there any evasion of the issue here? If the attempt to demolish his scheme is to be construed into

the attempt to prove that he is no Presbyterian, then his attempt to demolish ours was equally an assault upon us. We were compelled to show that his principles were not Presbyterian, or abandon the whole point in debate. No other course was left us. The real grief is, not that we evaded the issue, but that we stuck to it closely. The arrow went to the heart. *Hinc illæ lachrymæ!*

3. Let us now notice the Doctor's review of our objections to his scheme of Presbyterianism. That scheme, as detailed in the Assembly, and as now developed in the article before us, embraces four propositions:—1. The indwelling of the Spirit, as the source of the attributes and prerogatives of the Church; 2. The parity of the clergy; 3. The right of the people to take part in government; and, 4. The unity of the Church. Dr. Hodge represents us as having denied that the first proposition was true, and the other three *fundamental*. He is not precisely accurate in either statement. What we really assailed was the unqualified dictum, that where the Spirit is, there is the Church. The Spirit may be in individuals, or in families, or in societies, without giving to them the attributes and prerogatives of the Church. It is universally true, that where the Spirit is *not, there* there is no Church; but it is not universally true, that where the Spirit *is, there* is the Church. Something beside the indwelling of the Holy Ghost is necessary to convert a collection of believers into a *Church*. A dozen men may meet for purposes of prayer, and Jesus may be present in His Spirit to bless them; they may meet statedly and regularly, but all this does not make them a *Church*. There is an outward as well as an inward order established by law—an organization, imposed by authority, which is the condition of the healthful development of life, but not the product of that life. The outward God has adjusted to the inward, as the body to the soul. Neither springs from the other; they coexist according to a pre-established harmony. The Word reveals the outward; the Spirit imparts the inward. Spiritual impulses do not *generate* the Church; they only *corre-*

spond to it. The Church was made for them, as the world of sense was made for the body. The Spirit as a principle of life, therefore, is not the *source* of the attributes and prerogatives of the Church. A Society that claims to be the Church must show something more than the possession of the Spirit. The Reformers always pleaded something more in their own behalf. They always insisted that they had the *ministry* and *ordinances*—that is, in its main features, the external order which Christ appointed. Without the Word, without the positive appointments of the King, without a constitution made to our hands and adapted to our spiritual needs, we should have succeeded about as well in framing a Church, even with the help of regulative principles, from our spiritual life, as the soul would have succeeded in framing a body for itself. We never could have risen above the level of Quakerism. No body of men is a Church without the Spirit. That is admitted. Every body of men is a Church with the Spirit. That is a very different proposition. Against the proposition in its negative shape we have never uttered a syllable; we have had "no passing phase of thought" inconsistent with a cordial reception of it. We never denounced it as preposterous under the exigencies of debate or any other exigencies, and we are willing, albeit no lawyer, to be held responsible for everything we have said in relation it. In its affirmative form, the proposition cannot be maintained; in its negative form, it is the fundamental element of Evangelical religion. If Dr. Hodge cannot see the difference, we commend him to the study of some good treatise of logic.

Again, the Doctor says that we denied that the parity of the clergy, the right of the people to participate in government, and the unity of the Church, are *fundamental* principles of Presbyterianism. This, also, is a mistake. Whatever may be our opinion on that subject, what we really denied was, that these are *distinctive* principles of Presbyterianism. We maintained that, as far as we hold them at all, they are principles which we hold in common with

others—they are generic, and not differential, attributes. This is very different from saying that they are not *fundamental.*

And here we may notice his singular defence of the definition of Presbyterianism, which he constructed out of these generic properties. These principles, he told us, constitute the true idea of Presbyterianism. We ridiculed, as utterly illogical and absurd, the notion of a definition in which there was nothing to distinguish the thing defined. This Dr. Hodge denounces as extraordinary logic. Are we, then, to understand him as saying, that a definition can put us in possession of an adequate notion of a subject, without any allusion to the properties which make it what it is rather than anything else? The design of the real *definition* of the logicians, as interpreted in the language of modern philosophy, is "to analyze a complex notion"—we use the words of Mansel—"into its component parts." These parts are some of them common, some special; but both must be considered, or the notion is only partially decomposed, and the subsequent synthesis must be incomplete. Dr. Hodge affirms that there are two modes of defining—one by genus and differentia, the other by enumeration of attributes. Did it not occur to him that these are precisely the same thing? The genus and differentia, taken together, constitute the *whole* of the properties. They are only a compendious method of enumeration. You may mention properties one by one, or you may group several together under a common name. If the *name* is understood, those properties which it expresses are, in fact, mentioned. What we objected to in Dr. Hodge was, not that he did not technically state the genus and differentia, but that he made no allusion to the differentia at all. He defined Presbyterianism only by those attributes which it has in common with other systems. If the "merest tyro in logic can see the fallacy" of this objection, it is more than we can. To make the thing still more absurd, he gives us an example of definition by genus and specific dif-

ference, to show how complete a definition may be without the difference. "We may define man," says he, "to be a rational creature, invested with a material body. Should any professor of logic ridicule this definition, and say it includes nothing distinctive, he would only show his logic was in abeyance."[1] We presume that no professor of logic is likely to object to this definition, as it contains the genus —rational creature, and the differentia—a material body. It is true that the genus contains nothing distinctive. "God, angels and demons are all rational." Neither is a material body *characteristic*, but when beings are thought under the general notion of rationality, the possession or non-possession of a body does become differential and divisive. If, however, there were other rational beings besides men possessed of bodies differing in shape and structure, the mere mention of a body without reference to the distinctive form would not be sufficient. A difference may consist of a single attribute, or of a collection of attributes each of which, singly, may pertain to other subjects, but all of which exist nowhere else in combination. We presume that what Dr. Hodge means to censure in us is not that we demanded a specific difference, but that we expected from a difference which was constituted by combination that each element should itself be differential; in other words, that we took in a divided, what was only true in a compounded, sense. If so, our error was, not that we laid down a wrong rule of definition, but that we misapprehended the definition which was actually given. The differentia was there—the three principles in combination—but we mistook it. This plea, however, cannot be admitted. In the *first* place, Dr. Hodge announced his three principles *singly*, as the distinctive principles of our Church. He called them *our great distinctive principles*. Each is ours, in the sense that all are. They do not distinguish us as a whole—that was an after-thought; but they distin-

[1] Princeton Review for July, 1860, p. 557, and Appendix B to this volume, p. 625.

guish us as individual elements. In the *second* place, the combination, as explained by Dr. Hodge, is admitted by no denomination under the sun. It is a trinity of his own making. In the *third* place, if these principles were all held by us, they would only express the *heads* under which our peculiarities might be considered, but not the peculiarities themselves. Everything would depend upon the mode in which we realized them. The truth is, in the sense of Dr. Hodge, Presbyterianism is not specific, but generic. It does not describe a particular form of Government, but consists of principles which may be found in divers forms. Any scheme in which they might be embodied would be as much entitled to the name as our own Divine system. Considered, therefore, as a definition of Presbyterianism, in the specific sense of one particular form of Government—the form, for example, of our own or the Scotch Church—Dr. Hodge's three principles must be condemned as a wretched failure. Our extraordinary logic, "which the merest tyro is competent to expose," stands impregnable. The shifts and evasions of Dr. Hodge in defending his poor little progeny remind one of the amusing story of the cracked kettle. In the first place, he did not mean to give a definition by genus and differentia. He had discovered a more excellent way. He can "individualize and complete" an idea without such ceremony. But the more excellent way turns out to be the old way, only a little lengthened. What then? Why, the Doctor faces about, and insists that he did give the real differentia in his famous three principles. But upon examination, it appears that these three famous principles are categories in which the differentia may be sought, but in which the Doctor has failed to find it. What his next shift will be we cannot imagine. Perhaps he will attempt to show that the Categories and Predicables are the same thing.

Dr. Hodge sets off our blunders in logic with a prelusive flourish about our extravagant pretensions to superior skill in the science. We would seem to have been prodigiously

vain. It was kind, therefore, to expose our ignorance and humble our pride. We are deeply conscious that we are no better than we should be, but we should be sorry to have our brethren regard us in the light in which Dr. Hodge has been pleased to place us. The remarks were playfully made, and the anecdote to which they were an introduction was recited in a playful spirit, and from an innocent desire to mingle the gay with the grave in debate. Our words are not correctly reported by Dr. Hodge. They are given, with a single exception, exactly as we uttered them, in the number of this Review for July, 1860. What we said was: "I have paid some little attention to logic. I once wrote a book which that good brother criticised in his Review as having too much logic. I have *dipped into* Aristotle and several other masters of the science, and have probably the largest collection of works on the subject to be found in any private library in the whole country." This, surely, was not very bad. But if sportive remarks are to be construed in sober earnest and men are to be hung for jests, it is quite certain that no man's character is safe. And, since we have seen the use which Dr. Hodge has made of what was uttered in the presence of brethren with the kindest feelings—and without, we can confidently say, the least emotion of arrogance—we have been impressed with the importance of Robert Hall's remark, that the imprudent should never come into company with the malicious. The harmless story which we told, and in which we did not mean to wound—we ourselves had taken no offence at Dr. Hodge's ridicule of our first speech—that harmless story has done all the mischief. The real interpretation to be put upon the gross and exaggerated picture which Dr. Hodge has contrived to make by converting pleasantry into sober earnest, is, that, as he was sore himself, he wanted a companion in his pains.

Dr. Hodge endeavours to show that his three principles involve, substantially, the same definition of Presbyterianism which was given by ourselves. That Presbyterianism

may be referred to these *three heads*—as the powers of a government may be reduced to the heads, *executive*, *judicial* and *legislative*—whatever we may believe, we never denied. We only said that the vague generals did not "individualize and complete the idea." They were no definition. No doubt gold may be found in the category of substance, but the definition of *substance* is not the definition of *gold*. Ours was a proper definition. It distinguished Presbyterianism from every other form of church-government. It explained the *mode*, which is our peculiarity, in which we accept and realize the three great principles. The government of the Church by parliamentary assemblies, composed of two classes of Elders, and of Elders only, and so arranged as to realize the visible unity of the whole Church—this is Presbyterianism. It contains our officers—Presbyters, ruling and teaching. It contains our courts—Presbyteries, rising in gradation until we reach the General Assembly, the representative parliament of the whole Church. It distinguishes us from Congregationalism by our representative assemblies, and from Prelacy and Popery, not only by the assemblies, but by the officers of whom they are composed.

The reason of Dr. Hodge's preference for his vague generalities is not far to seek. He holds that the Church is tied down to no particular mode of organization. She has a right to create new offices and appoint new organs whenever she thinks it wise or expedient. He abhors the doctrine that whatever is not commanded is forbidden. He wants scope to play in. Now, our definition restricts the Church to one *mode* of organization. It ties her down to one particular form of church-government, and to one particular order of officers. Such a government as *jure divino* he cannot accept. But give him regulative principles only and not prescriptive laws, and he can change modes and forms at pleasure; and, so long as they are not repugnant to these principles, they are all Divine; not in the sense that God has appointed this rather than the other, but in the sense

that they are all equally allowable. It is to give this latitude to human discretion, that he makes Presbyterianism a generic and not a specific thing. He accepts our theory as *Divine*, because he thinks that we are at liberty to apply his three principles in the form we have done; but any *other mode* in which they are realized would be equally Divine. The real point at issue, therefore, is, whether any particular form of church-government is prescribed in the Scripture; not whether any regulative principles are there, but whether the elements and the mode of their combination are there. Do the Scriptures put all permanent church-power in the hands of Presbyters? Do the Scriptures recognize more than one class of Presbyters? Do they require that these Presbyters shall be organized into parliamentary assemblies? Do they exclude from these assemblies all who are not Presbyters? Do they restrict the Church to one kind of spiritual court? And do they define the powers with which these courts are entrusted? Is the whole system, with the exception of the circumstantial details, revealed in the Word of God, and bound upon the conscience by the authority of law? This is the real question. And with all his parade about *jus divinum*, Dr. Hodge denies it to our system in the sense in which the fathers of Presbyterianism understood it. The whole head and front of our offending is that we have exposed the laxity of his views.

II. We propose now to examine Dr. Hodge's theory of Presbyterianism, and test it by the authority of our Standards and the most approved Presbyterian writers. The points which we shall select are those in which we conceive he has departed from the faith. He professes to differ from us only in three things: 1. In relation to the office of Ruling Elders; 2. In relation to the nature of church-power, which he represents us as making joint and not several; and, 3. In relation to the measure and limit of the Church's discretion. Upon the second point, we shall soon see that he has fallen into error. The third does constitute

an impassable gulf betwixt us. But that has been sufficiently adverted to in another part of this article. There remains, then, the office of Ruling Elder. But is that all that divides us? At the close of the discussion in the last Assembly, we had been led to believe that, with the exception of his letting down the doctrine of Divine right, and his dangerous theory of the discretion of the Church, this was all. And, in logical consistency, it *is* all; but this all includes immensely more than those apprehend who look upon the question as simply one of words and names. His theory of the Elder's office is grounded in a radically false view of the relations of the people to the government of the Church. This is his πρώτον ψεύδος. The denial of the Presbyterial character of the Elder follows as a legitimate consequence. We shall, therefore, discuss the theory in both aspects—its assumption touching the place of the people, and its conclusion touching the place of the Elder.

1. Dr. Hodge lays down among the fundamental principles of Presbyterianism "*the right of the people to a substantive part in the government of the Church.*"[1] "As to the right of the people to take part in the government of the Church, this also is a Divine right. This follows because the Spirit of God, who is the source of all power, dwells in the people, and not exclusively in the clergy; because we are commanded to submit ourselves to our brethren in the Lord; because the people are commanded to exercise this power, and are upbraided when unfaithful or negligent in the discharge of this duty; because the gift of governing or ruling is a permanent gift; and because, in the New Testament, we find the brethren in the actual, recognized exercise of the authority in question, which was never disputed in the Church until the beginning of the dark ages."[2] This is a capital argument for Independency.

[1] Princeton Review for July, 1860, p. 547, and Appendix B to this volume, p. 617.

[2] Princeton Review for July, 1860, p. 555, and Appendix B to this volume, p. 623.

Here it is plainly and unequivocally asserted, not that the people have a right to choose their rulers, but they have a right of rule themselves. They are as truly *rulers* as the *Presbyters*. The exercise of government is, indeed, distributed betwixt them and Presbyters. It is a joint business. A substantive part in government means, if it means anything, a right to take part in the actual administration of discipline. The people, *qua* people, have a vote.

Is this Presbyterianism? What say our Standards? "The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church, hath therein appointed a government *in the hand of church-officers*, distinct from the civil magistrate." Not a word is said about the share of the people. The *whole* is put into the hands of *church-officers*. Again: "*to these officers* the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed, by virtue whereof they have power respectively to retain and remit sins, to shut that kingdom against the impenitent both by the Word and censures, and to open it unto penitent sinners, by the ministry of the Gospel, and by absolution from censures, as occasion shall require."[1] If the keys are exclusively in the hands of church-officers, and these keys represent the whole power of the Church, as exercised in teaching and discipline, the *clavis doctrinæ* and the *clavis regiminis*, we should like to know what is left to the people? But, to cut the matter short, we shall adduce a passage from a very admirable pamphlet of Principal Cunningham of Edinburgh—*clarum et venerabile nomen*—which saves us the trouble, in the references it makes, of appealing to any other witnesses. We beg the reader to weigh the extract with care.

The substance of Dr. Muir's whole argument, on the ground of which he has accused the great majority of the Church of "subverting," "violating," and "extinguishing an ordinance of Christ," when thrown into the form of a syllogism, is this:

Christ has vested the exclusive power of governing and ruling the Church in ecclesiastical office-bearers.

[1] Confession of Faith, ch. xxx., secs. 1, 2.

To require the consent, or to give effect to the dissent, of the people in the settlement of Ministers, is to assign to them a share in the government of the Church.

Ergo, the principle of the veto act is opposed to the appointment of Christ.

Now, Dr. Muir knows well enough that his opponents concede his major proposition, and deny the minor, and yet his main efforts are directed to this object of proving the major, which he does by quotations from the Standards of the Church, just as if the orthodoxy of his opponents had been liable to any suspicion, while he makes no attempt to establish the minor, which we meet with a direct negative. It was the more necessary for him to establish the minor proposition by satisfactory evidence, because in past ages it has been maintained chiefly by Papists and Independents, and has been strenuously opposed by the ablest and most learned defenders of Presbytery, who have contended that even giving to the people the right of electing their Ministers—a larger share of influence than the right of consenting or dissenting—did not imply that they had any share in the government of the Church. If the election of one Minister by the people does not imply their ruling and governing in the Church, still less does their consenting to, or dissenting from, the nomination of another. Cardinal Bellarmine, the great champion of Popery, lays down the same principle as Dr. Muir, in arguing against the right of the Christian people. Bellarmine's doctrine upon the point is this: "Eligere pastores ad gubernationem et regimen pertinere certissimum est; non igitur populo convenit pastores eligere."—(De Clericis, c. vii., tom. II., p. 981.) Ames's answer, in full accordance with the views of Presbyterian divines, was this: "Electio quamvis pertineat ad gubernationem et regimen constituendum, non tamen est actus regiminis aut gubernationis."—(Bellarminus Enervatus, tom. II., lib. iii., p. 94.)

The same principle was brought forward for an opposite purpose, at the time of the Westminster Assembly, by the Independents. They argued in this way: Presbyterians admit that Ministers ought to be settled upon the choice, or with the consent, of the people. This implies that the people have some share in the government of the Church, and, therefore, the Presbyterian doctrine, which excludes them from government, must be false. Now, it is manifest that the essential medium of proof in this argument is just the very doctrine asserted by Bellarmine, and assumed by Dr. Muir, in arguing against the rights of the Christian people. How, then, did the ablest and most learned of our forefathers meet this argument of the Independents? Not by disclaiming the doctrine that Ministers ought to be settled upon the choice, or with the consent, of the people, but by maintaining that this did not involve any exercise of government or jurisdiction on their

part. They established, in opposition to the Independents, and in vindication of the Presbyterian principle about the government of the Church being vested in the office-bearers, the falsehood of the very doctrine on which Bellarmine and Dr. Muir found their opposition to the rights of the Christian people in the settlement of their Ministers. Dr. Muir will find the proof of this in Gillespie's Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland, pp. 116 and 117; Baillie's Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time, part I., c. ix., pp. 194 and 195; Wood's Refutation of Lockyer, part II., pp. 214 and 244; and when an attempt is made to answer their arguments, it will be time enough to enter upon the discussion. In the mean time, we take the liberty of declaring that Dr. Muir has presumed to condemn the majority of the Church as guilty of "violating and extinguishing an ordinance of Christ," while the charge rests solely upon a proposition, in support of which he has not produced one particle of evidence, which has hitherto been maintained only by Papists and Independents, and which has been strenuously opposed by the ablest and most learned defenders of Presbytery.[1]

Dr. Hodge cannot extricate himself from his anti-Presbyterian position by saying that he attributes the power of rule to the people only *in actu primo*. In that sense, *all* power, whether of rule or teaching, resides in the Church as a whole, without reference to the distinction between officers and people. Dr. Hodge himself admits it. "All power," says he, "is, *in sensu primo, in the people.*"[2] The life of the Church is one; officers are but the organs through which it is manifested, in acts of jurisdiction and instruction; and the acts of all officers, in consequence of this organic relation, are the acts of the Church. They are the *principium quo;* she is the *principium quod.* The power inheres in her; it is exercised by them. According to this doctrine, it is obvious that, as to the exercise of power, her relation to Ministers is precisely the same as her relation to Ruling Elders. It is the Church that *preaches* through the one, as really as it is the Church that *rules* through the

[1] Strictures on the Rev. Jas. Robertson's Observations on the Veto Act, pp. 23, 24. Edinburgh, 1340.

[2] Princeton Review for July, 1860, p. 547, and Appendix B to this volume, p. 617.

other. Ministers are her mouth, as Elders are her hands. Both equally represent her, and both are nothing except as they represent her. *In actu primo*, it is absurd to talk about the people having a *part* in the government; they have the *whole*. And so they have the whole inherent, radical, primary power of preaching and of dispensing the sacraments. All lawful acts of all lawful officers are acts of the Church, and they who hear the preacher or the Presbytery hear the *Church*. The case is analogous to the motions of the human body. Vital power is not in the hands or the feet; it is in the whole body. But the exercise of that power, in walking or in writing, is confined to particular organs. The power is one, but its functions are manifold, and it has an organ appropriate to every function. This makes it an *organic* whole. So the Church has functions; these functions require appropriate organs; these organs are created by Christ, and the Church becomes an organic whole.

Now, according to Dr. Hodge, the people, as contradistinguished from the clergy, are *one* of the organs of government, or, if not a whole organ, a part of one. If they are not a hand, they are a finger. They have a *substantive part* in *government*, in a sense in which they do not have a substantive part in preaching or in dispensing the sacraments. Dr. Hodge divides the Church into two castes, with separate and even antagonistic interests; and government—although he repudiates the notion that all power is joint—is the joint product of two factors. The division is thoroughly Popish, though the use made of it is not. On the contrary, we contend that the Church is an indivisible unit, and that government is one of the forms in which it realizes its Divine life. The distinction between clergy and people—a distinction always offensive to Presbyterian ears—is not a distinction of parts into which a compound whole may be divided, nor a distinction of ranks like that of the peerage and commons, but a distinction of functions and relations in the same whole. It is a confusion of ideas

upon this subject which gives rise to Dr. Hodge's exaggerated picture of a clerical despotism.

Here, then, is Dr. Hodge's first great blunder. He makes the people, *in secundo actu*, *rulers* in the Church. He gives them a right, *as people*, to exercise power in acts of government. They and the clergy, as separate and distinct elements, like the vulgar and nobility in aristocratic States, constitute the Church, and each party has its separate rights and interests. There is a House of Lords and a House of Commons. And, instead of using the terms *office-bearers*, or *Presbyters*, or *Elders*, all which denote the organic relation of the rulers to the Church, presenting them simply as the media of *exercising* power, he adopts *clergy*, which, from its Popish associations, is better suited to designate a privileged *rank* above the laity.

2. Setting out with this fundamental misconception, he has failed to seize the true idea of the Elder's office. He looks upon it, in the *first* place, as a mere expedient by which the people appear, as a separate class, in our church-courts. The Elder represents not the Church, as a whole, but a particular interest or party. This leads to a *second* error, by which a representative is merged into a deputy, and the Elder becomes the mere factor of the people. Both errors spring from a radical misunderstanding of the genuine nature of representative government, as distinguished from every other species of government.

(1.) That Dr. Hodge makes the Elder the representative of the *people*, not in the general and scriptural sense of the *Church*, but in the restricted and contracted sense of a class, a *party*, in the Church, is evident from every line that he has written. In the extract from page 555, which we have already cited, it is the right of the people, as distinguished from the clergy, to take part in government that he is defending; and his first reason is, that the Spirit of God dwells in them, and not exclusively in the clergy. It is this right which they exercise through representatives, and these representatives are Ruling Elders. These Elders are,

consequently, the expedient by which the *people* appear in our Church courts. Through the Ministers the clergy appear; through the Elders the people appear.

(2.) If they are the *appearance* of the people, it is obvious that they are simple deputies. They are the people, in the same sense in which Ministers are the clergy. They must, therefore, do what the people would do, say what the people would say, approve what the people would approve, and condemn what the people would condemn. We might say that they are the Commons, and the clergy the Peerage; but the illustration would fail in this respect, that the Commons in Parliament are not mere exponents of the will of their constituents. They have a higher and a nobler function. The whole worth of the office of Ruling Elder, in the eyes of Dr. Hodge, turns upon the fact that the "Elder is a layman." It is this that "makes him a real power, a distinct element, in our system." This is what secures the Church against clerical despotism. The popular will has an exponent adequate to resist the clerical will. The whole argument is absurd, unless the Elder is the *locum tenens*, the deputy, of the people. What makes it decisively evident that this is Dr. Hodge's conception of the relation of the Elder to the people, is the circumstance that he resolves the necessity of the office into the fact of the impossibility of the people appearing in mass from their enormous multitude. He admits that in a single small congregation it might be done, but on a large scale, as when the Church embraces a city, a province, or a kingdom, it is clearly impossible. *But for this impossibility* there would be no need of Elders. *In consequence* of this impossibility "the people must appear by their representatives, or not appear at all." If, therefore, the Ruling Elder is only the appearance of the people, that is, if he is the whole people condensed into one man, he must be the mere organ of the people. Their will is his law.

Now, all this proceeds upon a fundamental error in relation to the nature of representative government. In it

the people do not appear *in propriâ personâ*, not because they cannot appear, but because they *ought* not to appear. Mass meetings would make poor legislatures, and still poorer judges and magistrates. The end of all civil government is justice. To determine justice in concrete circumstances, and to secure it by fixed institutions and impartial laws, exacts wisdom and deliberation, and wisdom and deliberation exact a restraint upon human passions and prejudices. Parliamentary assemblies, consisting of chosen men, are a device through which the State seeks to ascertain the true and the right. They are a limitation or restraint upon the caprices, the passions, the prejudices of the masses. For the same reason, the State administers the law through judges. Parliamentary assemblies, in most free States, are themselves checked by division into two chambers. The end is still the same—to guard against all the influences that might be unfriendly to the discovery and supreme authority of truth. These bodies are, therefore, the organs of the commonwealth by which she seeks to realize the great idea of justice. They are not the exponents of the will, but of the wisdom, of the State.

In strictly representative governments, the people only choose their rulers, they never instruct them; or, if they do instruct them, they depart from the fundamental idea of the theory. When they wish to impeach them, or to throw them off, unless in cases of violent revolution, they still proceed through representative bodies.

Obedience to God is the end of the government of the Church. The design is to ascertain and enforce His law. The same necessity of deliberation, prudence, caution and wisdom obtains here as in civil affairs; and, therefore, the Church, as a commonwealth, does all her legislative and judicial thinking through chosen men. Her assemblies are also checked by what is equivalent to two chambers. Her rulers are of different classes, in order that every variety of talent and intellectual habits may enter into her councils. These courts are organs through which the *Church*,

and the *Church* as a whole, expounds and enforces the law of God; and every ruler is a man solemnly appointed to seek and execute the will of the Master. Our church courts contain no deputies to utter a foregone conclusion, no exponents of the opinions and decrees of any set of men, but counsellors, senators, met to deliberate, to conclude, to decide.

From this view it follows, that the Minister sustains precisely the same relation to the Church with the Ruling Elder. They are both representatives, not of an order or a class, but of the *Church* of God. Their duties in the church courts are exactly the same. Both have to seek the Word from the mouth of the Lord, and to declare what they have received from Him. BOTH ARE CLERGYMEN AND BOTH ARE LAYMEN. Let us explain ourselves: for the explanation will detect an illusion which vitiates much of Dr. Hodge's article.

Clergy and *laity* are terms which, in the New Testament, are indiscriminately applied to all the *people* of God. About this there can be no question. In the New Testament sense, therefore, every Minister is a layman, and every layman is a clergyman. In the common Protestant sense, the origin of which it is useless to trace, the terms express the distinction between the office-bearers of the Church and the people in their private capacity. A clergyman is a man clothed with the office of a Presbyter. Now, an office in a free government is not a *rank* or a *caste*. It is not an estate of the realm. It is simply a public trust. A man, therefore, does not cease to belong to the people by being chosen to office. The President of the United States is still one of the people. The Representatives in Congress are still among the people. Our Judges and Senators are still a part of the people. Office makes a distinction in relations—the distinction between a private and a public man—but makes no distinction in person or in rank. Office-bearers are not an *order*, in the legal sense. If a clergyman, therefore, is only one of the people discharging a public trust,

if to be a clergyman means nothing more than that an individual is not simply a *private* man, it is clearly a title as applicable to the Ruling Elder as to the Minister, unless it should be denied that the Ruling Elder's is an office at all. To convey the idea that the distinctions induced by ordination are official, and not personal, our Standards have studiously avoided the word *clergy*, which had been so much abused in the Papacy, and substituted the more correct expressions *officers* and *office-bearers*. If a man chooses arbitrarily to restrict the term *clergyman* to preachers, then, of course, the Ruling Elder is not a clergyman, for he is not a Minister of the Gospel. But if it be taken to designate office-bearers, then it applies to all who are not in private relations. The only point about which we are solicitous is, that the relations of the Ruling Elder to the Church are precisely the same as those of the Minister. They are both, in the same sense, though not to the same degree, representatives of the people, the Church. The Minister represents her in rule and in preaching the Gospel and dispensing the sacraments. The Ruling Elder represents her only in rule. The extent of their representation is the only official difference betwixt them.

If Ruling Elders are not exclusively the representatives of the people, why are they said, in our Standards, to be properly the representatives of the people? The answer is obvious—because they *are* so. But to conclude that because an attribute is properly predicated of one subject, it is denied of all others, would be most extraordinary logic. To say that because man may be properly called mortal, therefore nothing else is, would be a most "lame and impotent conclusion." The Senators in our State Legislatures are as really representatives of the people as the members of the other house, yet the latter alone are technically styled *representatives*. Nothing is more common than to limit the use of a general term, or convert an appellative into a proper name. In that way the terms *minister* and *pastor* have become restricted to a particular office.

The reason of restricting the term *representative of the people* to the Ruling Elder was probably this: To the English mind that term conveyed the idea of a chosen ruler. Now, the Elder was nothing but a chosen ruler, and as his office answered precisely to the sense of the term, in its popular use, the framers of our Standards adopted it. They had the English Parliament before them, and the only chosen rulers it contained were the members of the House of Commons. And as they were commonly called the *representatives of the people*, the Ruling Elder who discharged the same functions in the Church, received the same appellation. Ministers, being something more than rulers, were distinguished by titles which, to the popular mind, would not convey this narrow idea.

Having thus exposed Dr. Hodge's blunders in relation to the right of the people to *a substantive part* in the government of the Church, and his consequent blunder in relation to the nature of the Ruling Elder's office; having shown that all office-bearers sustain precisely the same relation to the people; that it is the Church that rules and teaches, and dispenses the sacraments through them; that they are all, without exception, her representatives, in different departments of her work—her organs, through which she moves and wills and thinks and acts,—we proceed now to what will be an easy task, to determine the official title of the Ruling Elder in the New Testament. Is he, or is he not, a Presbyter? This is not a question of mere names. The Presbyter is the *only* officer into whose hands, as a permanent arrangement, God has put the government of His Church. He is the only *instrumentum quo*—the instrument through which the Church can exercise the power of rule which inherently resides in her. If, therefore, the Ruling Elder is not a Presbyter, he is an intruder, a usurper, in the courts of the Lord's house. He has no business in any Presbytery. Man may put him there, but it is without the authority of God. This is, therefore, a vital question, so far as concerns his office. In answer to this question, Dr.

Hodge denies, and we affirm. As in the present article we occupy the position of a respondent, we shall content ourselves with replying to the objections which the "brother from Princeton" has been able to present. Let us look first to the state of the question, and then to his arguments in the negative.

Dr. Hodge tells us, that the real question is, whether the Ruling Elder is a clergyman or a layman. This is a great mistake; for we regard him as both, and we regard the Minister of the Gospel as both. They are both clergymen, and they are both laymen; and any theory which denies this is utterly Popish and Prelatical. What we presume Dr. Hodge means is, that the real question is, whether the Ruling Elder is a Preacher, a Minister of the Gospel, or not? But this has never been disputed. Although he repeatedly affirms that the theory which makes the Ruling Elder a Presbyter makes him a Preacher, we defy him to produce a single respectable writer who has ever confounded the functions of rule with those of teaching. He knows, or ought to know, that such a confusion has been persistently denied. We give the Ruling Elder no official right to dispense either the Word or the sacraments. There is not now, and never has been, any question upon that point. Dr. Hodge is out-and-out wrong, with the exception of the ordaining power, when he charges us with holding, that Ruling Elders have as much right to "preach, ordain and administer the sacraments" as Ministers of the Gospel. What, then, is the question? The real question is, whether the term *Presbyter* means teacher or ruler; and if ruler, whether it is generic or specific—that is, Whether all rulers are of one class? We affirm that *Presbyter*, in the New Testament, means *chosen ruler*, and that these rulers are of two kinds, distinguished from each other by the property of preaching or not preaching. Here lies the real point in dispute. Does *Presbyter*, in the New Testament, mean only a Minister of the Gospel, one commissioned to dispense the Word and sacraments, or does it mean one who has been set

apart to bear rule in the house of God, whether he preaches or not? In other words, Is it the generic title of all spiritual office-bearers, whatever may be their special functions? If it is, the Ruling Elder is a Presbyter; if it is not, he is nothing. Now, Dr. Hodge maintains that *Presbyter* means only a Minister of the Gospel; that a man who is not authorized to preach and administer the sacraments has no right to this name as an official title.

Let us look at his arguments. He pleads, *first*, the doctrine and practice of all the Reformed Churches. All have regarded *Presbyter* as equivalent to *Preacher*. There never was a more unaccountable blunder. Surely, the Church of Scotland is to be ranked among the Reformed Churches; and yet that Church teaches expressly that the term *Elder*, as an official title, is generic, and includes two classes—one which does, and one which does not, teach. "The word *Elder* in the Scripture," says the Second Book of Discipline, chap. vi., "sometimes is the name of age, sometimes of office. When it is the name of an office, sometimes it is taken largely, comprehending as well the Pastors and Doctors, as them who are called *seniors* or *elders*," that is, Ruling Elders. Again: "It is not necessary that all Elders be also Teachers of the Word. Albeit, the chief ought to be so, and so are worthy of double honour." The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, we suspect, may also be ranked among the Reformed Churches; yet its doctrine and practice are directly contrary to the theory of Dr. Hodge. That Church divides Elders into two classes, teaching and ruling, and makes each equally apostolic Bishops.[1] This Church also requires that the Ruling Elder shall be ordained by prayer and laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.[2] And in other Churches, where the ordination is by the Minister alone, it is evidently by the Minister as representing the parochial Presbytery.

[1] Constitution and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, chap. i., sections 3, 4.

[2] Ibid., chap. iv., sec. 2.

But, to cut this matter of authority short, our own Standards unambiguously affirm that the office of Ruling Elder "has been understood, by a *great part of the Protestant Reformed Churches*, to be designated in the Scriptures by the title of *governments; and of those who rule well, but do not labour in the Word and doctrine.*" The reference is to 1 Tim. v. 17; and the allegation, consequently, is that a great part of the Protestant Reformed Churches has understood the official title *Presbyter* as including the Ruling Elder. What now becomes of Dr. Hodge's assertion, that this is entirely contrary to the doctrine and practice of *all* the Reformed Churches? The Church of Scotland is against him; the Church in Ireland is against him; and our own Standards are against him. What a proof of the reckless hardihood of his assertions! But the chapter of his misfortunes is not yet complete. He quotes Calvin, and quotes him in such a way as to make the impression that Calvin holds the same doctrine with himself. Calvin, indeed, held that the official Presbyters of the New Testament were Bishops, but *Bishops* and *Preachers* are not synonymous terms. If Dr. Hodge means to say that Calvin did not regard the Ruling Elder as officially a Presbyter, he is in grievous error.

In commenting on James v. 15, he says:

"I include here generally all those who presided over the Church; for PASTORS WERE NOT ALONE CALLED PRESBYTERS OR ELDERS, BUT ALL THOSE WHO WERE CHOSEN FROM THE PEOPLE TO BE, AS IT WERE, CENSORS, TO PROTECT DISCIPLINE. For every Church had, as it were, its own Senate, chosen from men of weight and of proved integrity."

On 1 Pet. v. 1: "By this name (Presbyters) he designates Pastors and ALL THOSE WHO ARE APPOINTED FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH."

On 1 Tim. v. 17, he observes, first, that "*Elder* is not a name of age, but of office," and then subsequently adds: "We may learn from this that there were at that time TWO KINDS OF ELDERS; for all were not ordained to teach. The words plainly mean, *that there were some who ruled well and honourably, but who did not hold the office of teachers.* And, indeed, there were chosen from among the people men of worth and of good character, who united with Pastors in a common

council and authority, administered the discipline of the Church, and were a kind of censors for the correction of morals."

1 Cor. xii. 28: "By *governments*, I understand Elders, who had the charge of discipline. For the Primitive Church had its Senate, for the purpose of keeping the people in propriety of deportment, as Paul shows elsewhere, when he makes mention of TWO KINDS OF PRESBYTERS." Cf. 1 Cor. v. 4.

So much for the Doctor's *first* argument—the doctrine and practice of all the Reformed Churches. Now for the *second* argument. It is so rich, we give it in Dr. Hodge's own words: "In thus destroying the peculiarity of the office, its value is destroyed. It is precisely because the Ruling Elder is a layman, that he is a real power, a distinct element, in our system. The moment you dress him in canonicals, you destroy his power and render him ridiculous. It is because he is not a clergyman, it is because he is one of the people, engaged in the ordinary business of life, separated from the professional class of Ministers, that he is what he is in our church-courts."[1]

If by *layman* is meant one of the people of God, we agree that every Elder ought to be a layman, and should continue so to the end of life; but we suspect that the qualification is not peculiar to him—that it is equally, perhaps more, important in the case of Ministers. If by *layman* is meant a private member of the Church, then the importance of the office depends upon its being *no office* at all. But if by *layman* is meant one who is not a Preacher of the Gospel, then we accept the proposition. It is precisely what we contend for—that our spiritual rulers should be of two classes, distinguished from each other by their training, their pursuits, their daily associations and their habits of thought. It is this variety of mental constitution and discipline which secures in our courts completeness of deliberation. Dr. Hodge says, that if you dress the Ruling Elder in canonicals you make him ridiculous. We submit whether a Presbyterian *minister* would cut a much better figure in the same habili-

[1] Princeton Review for July, 1860, p. 560, and App. B, p. 627.

ments. But the illustration shows how deeply rooted in his mind is the Popish notion, that the "clergy" are not of the people—that they are something more than simple members of the Church clothed with office.

Dr. Hodge's *third* argument is the crowning glory of his logic. He has discovered that, if we make the Ruling Elder a clergyman, we reduce "the government of the Church to a clerical despotism." Let us now read *officer* or *office-bearer* in the place of *clergyman*—for they are the same thing—and then the position is, that a government administered by *officers* is an *official* despotism. We should like to know what government under the sun, upon these terms, can escape from the charge. How else it *can* be administered, we are wholly incompetent to understand! Is the government of the United States a despotism, because all power is exercised through representative assemblies and magistrates—through *officers*, chosen and installed for the very purpose? We had always thought that it was a security for liberty to have an appropriate organ through which every department of power is exercised. The right of election connects these officers immediately with the people. But, says Dr. Hodge, the right of the people to choose their rulers does not keep their rulers from being despots, if the people exercise the functions of government only through these rulers. The illustration by which he commends this extraordinary thesis is still more marvellous. "If," says he, "according to the Constitution of the United States, the President, Senators, Representatives, Heads of Departments, Judges, Marshals, all naval and military men holding commissions—in short, all officers, from the highest to the lowest (except overseers of the poor), must be clergymen, every one would see and feel that all power was in the hands of the clergy." And, on the same principle, if all the clergy were chosen from the class of shoemakers, it would put all the power of the Church into the hands of shoemakers. We should then have a despotism of cobblers. Dr. Hodge confounds, in the first place, the class from which

an officer is chosen with the duties of the office—what the man was before his election with what he becomes by virtue of his election. The President of the United States would have no other powers than he now has, whatever might have been his previous profession or pursuits. His office would be the same, whether he was previously a preacher or a rail-splitter. To limit eligibility to a single class of citizens would be arbitrary and unjust. But this tyranny would not affect the duties of the office itself. He would rule only as President, and not as clergyman, doctor, or rail-splitter.

In the next place, Dr. Hodge overlooks the fact, that to make a man a clergyman is to do precisely the same thing in the Church, which we do in the State when we make a man a President, Senator, or Representative. The clergy are to the Church what these officers are to the State. If, now, we selected the clergy only from a single class, if none could be preachers but from such and such professions in life, then we would do what Dr. Hodge's illustration supposes to be done in the State, when it limits the field of choice to the clergy alone. But there is no such restriction. The Church chooses her rulers from the whole body of her members. She cares nothing about their previous employments and occupations. The doors of the ministry are open to all that are qualified. This illustration, however, conclusively proves how thoroughly Popish the Doctor's notions of the "clergy" are. It is an estate in the Church, and not simply *an office*.[1]

[1] Hence the common statement, that the government of the Presbyterian Church is aristocratic, is founded in error. If the choice of its officers were restricted to a single class of men, that class would then be an aristocracy, and the charge would be just. But, as there is no such restriction, the government is purely republican. It is no objection that the rulers hold their offices for life. In some of the States of the Federal Union the Judges are chosen for life, but that does not make them an order of nobility. As long as they are *chosen* to, and do not *inherit*, their offices, or the right to be elected, they *are of the people*, and are distinguished from their brethren only as a public from a private man.

But, in the third place, the argument is utterly rotten, as despotism does not depend upon the instruments by which power is exercised, but upon the *nature* of *the power itself.* The essential idea of despotism is a government of *will,* in contradistinction from a government of *law and right.* If the Church made the *will* of its rulers law, no matter what those rulers might be called, the government would be a despotism. The right of choice would not be freedom. The slave might, indeed, choose his master, but he would be a slave still, and for the simple reason that *the nature* of *the master's power* is despotic. But when a government has a Constitution, and a Constitution which provides for the supremacy of law and right, then the government, no matter who administers it, is free. Our Presbyterian rulers have a Divine charter to go by, and their authority is purely ministerial—it is to execute the provisions of that charter. Their will, as mere will, has no place in the government; it is the law of God, which alone is supreme, and that law is perfect freedom. If the rulers of the Church transcend their commission, no one is bound to obey them, and the Constitution of the Church makes abundant provision for holding them to a strict responsibility. They stand in the same relation to the Church that the rulers of the United States sustain to the people, and if the one government is free, the other cannot be despotic. The ideal of the freest, noblest government under heaven, which Milton so rapturously sketched, corresponds, without an exception, to our Presbyterian, representative republic.

It is true that we denounced Dr. Hodge's argument on this subject as *ad captandum,* and compared the logic which could deduce from the principles of a free representative republic a clerical despotism to the logic of a "Hard-shell" Baptist minister in Alabama, who found the destined prevalence of immersion in the simple statement, that the voice of the turtle shall be heard in the land. But we beg pardon of the Hard-shell brother. His interpretation has the merit of ingenuity. Dr. Hodge's argument has only

the merit of calling hard names. It is a vulgar appeal to the passions and prejudices associated with the notions of priestly supremacy. These associations have sprung from the abuses of Popery and Prelacy, and we are glad to see that, while the Doctor holds to their radical conception of the clergy, he is not prepared to develop and expand it into tyranny. Here he parts with his friends and allies.

Dr. Hodge says that, in the last extremity,[1] we ourselves disclaimed the new theory. If this means that we conceded that the Ruling Elder is not officially a Presbyter, or that the term *Presbyter* as a title of office does not include two classes, distinguished from each other by the possession or non-possession of the property of preaching, it is altogether a mistake. If it means, however, that we did not claim for the Ruling Elder the right of dispensing the Word and sacraments, it is true. We never held any such opinion. We have never been in any extremity which forced us to abandon what we never possessed. Dr. Hodge is willing to call the Elder a *Presbyter*, in the sense in which Apostles are called *Deacons*. But the point is, not as to what the Second Book of Discipline calls the common meaning of the word—in that sense, any old man is a Presbyter, and every believer is a Deacon—but as to the official sense, the sense in which it expresses jurisdiction in the house of God. That is the sense upon which the question concerning the

[1] This "last extremity" of ours is amusing. The real state of the case was this: We were dealing out some pretty effective blows against Dr. Hodge's hybrid theory of Presbyterianism, when the Doctor, unable to contain himself, sprang to his feet in great excitement as if the terrors of death were before him, and protested that he was of our way of thinking. In our simplicity, we verily thought that he was begging for quarter. We were sorry for him, and let him off.

Surprised, no doubt, upon his return home, to find himself alive, and certain that some one must have died in that hour of mortal agony, he quietly concludes that it was we, and proceeds to give our dying confession. We suppose that we must accept the statement, and in all future accounts of the scene imitate the Frenchman, who related to an English officer the story of a fatal duel in which he had been engaged. And what do you think, said he to the officer, was the result? Of course, was the reply, you killed your man. Oh no! said the Frenchman, he killed me!

application of the title turns, and upon that question we have always had but one opinion.

If, after the specimens he has had, any blunders of Dr. Hodge could astonish the reader, he would open his eyes in amazement when he hears the Doctor passionately affirm: "We do not differ from Dr. Miller as to the nature of the office of Ruling Elders." Oh no! the only difference is about the method of proving it Divine! Let us see. Dr. Hodge says that the Ruling Elder is not a scriptural bishop; Dr. Miller affirms that he is. Dr. Hodge says that the Ruling Elder is only a layman; Dr. Miller affirms that he is also a clergyman. Dr. Hodge accepts the ordination of an Elder by a single Minister; Dr. Miller affirms that it should be by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. In what, then, do they agree? Echo answers, What? The pupil is evidently endeavouring to wipe out every trace of the master's instructions. And if Dr. Miller's theory shall continue to maintain its ground at Princeton, it will not be from any assistance at the hands of Dr. Hodge.

Let us hear Dr. Miller:

"Now it has been alleged," says he, "by the opponents of Ruling Elders, that to represent the Scriptures as holding forth TWO CLASSES of Elders, one class as both teaching and ruling, and the other as ruling only, and consequently the latter as holding a station not exactly identical with the former, amounts to a virtual surrender of the argument [for the parity of the clergy] derived from the identity of *Bishop* and *Presbyter*. This objection, however, is totally groundless. If we suppose *Elder*, as used in the Scripture, to be a generic term, comprehending all who bore rule in the Church; and if we consider the term *Bishop* as also a generic term, including all who sustained the relation of official *inspectors* or *overseers* of a flock; then it is plain that all Bishops were scriptural Elders, and that all Elders, whether both Teachers and Rulers, or Rulers only, provided they were placed over a parish as *inspectors* or *overseers*, were scriptural Bishops. Now this, I have no doubt, was the fact."[1]

Here we have *one order*, or *genus*, with two co-ordinate species, and the Elder affirmed to be a scriptural Bishop.

[1] Essay on the Nature and Duties of the office of Ruling Elder, 1831, p. 68.

Again:

If this view of the nature and importance of the office before us be admitted, the question very naturally arises, whether it be correct to call this class of Elders *lay* Elders; or whether they have not such a strictly ecclesiastical character as should prevent the use of that language in speaking of them. This is one of the points in the present discussion, concerning which the writer of this Essay frankly confesses that he has, in some measure, altered his opinion. Once he was disposed to confine the epithet *clerical* to Teaching Elders, and to designate those who ruled only, and did not teach, as *lay* Elders. But more mature inquiry and reflection have led him, first, to doubt the correctness of this opinion, and finally to persuade him, that, so far as the distinction between *clergy* and *laity* is proper at all, it ought not to be made the point of distinction between these two classes of Elders; and that, when we speak of the one as *clergymen*, and the other as *laymen*, we are apt to convey an idea altogether erroneous, if not seriously mischievous.[1]

As to the ordination of a Ruling Elder, he says:

It seems to be a fundamental principle in every department, both of the natural and moral world, that everything must be considered as capable of begetting its like. If this be so, does it not follow, as a plain dictate of common sense, that, in ordaining Ruling Elders, the members of the Session already in office should lay on hands with the Pastor, in setting apart an additional member to the same office? In other words, if there be such a body already in existence in the Church, THE HANDS OF THE PAROCHIAL PRESBYTERY ought to be laid on, in adding to its own number, and the right hand of fellowship given, at the close of the service, by each member of the Session, to each of his newly-ordained brethren. This appears to me equally agreeable to reason and Scripture, and highly adapted to edification. And if there be no eldership already in the Church in which the ordination takes place, then the Presbytery, upon proper application being made to them, ought to appoint at least one Minister, and two or more Ruling Elders, to attend at the time and place most convenient, to perform the ordination.[2]

We have now reviewed all Dr. Hodge's objections to the theory which makes the Ruling Elder officially a Presbyter. He has not advanced a single argument which invalidates

[1] Essay on the Nature and Duties of the Office of Ruling Elder, 1831, pp. 202, 203.

[2] Ibid., p. 290.

the position, that this term designates an order, or a genus, distributed into two species, whose divisive principle is the possession or non-possession of the property of preaching. The generic attributes of the species, in both cases, must be exactly the same. The genus is one, and that is what is meant by saying the order is one. The species themselves, of course, differ: otherwise they could not be species at all, and the difference is accurately signalized by the epithets *teaching* and *ruling*. Any other doctrine is stark Prelacy. If the Ruling Elder is a spiritual officer, and yet is not a co-ordinate species with the Minister of the Gospel, there must be subordination. If they are not equal, one must be *higher* than the other. If they are not of the same *order*, then they are of *different* orders, and the parity of spiritual office-bearers is given to the winds. This is the legitimate conclusion of the whole matter—to convert Presbyterian Ministers into Prelates, and Presbyterian Elders into their humble subjects.

We must advert to another point, which Dr. Hodge has signalized as a point of difference betwixt his theory and ours. He alleges that we teach "that all power in the Church is joint, and not several. That is, it can be exercised only by church-courts, and not in any case by individual officers."[1] Now, the singular fact is that, in the whole course of the debate in the General Assembly, we never once adverted to the distinction in question. We carefully avoided it. It was another brother, a brother, we think, from Mississippi, who introduced it. We not only never taught ourselves that all power is joint, and not several, but we never heard of a single human being on the face of the earth who *did* teach it. We defy Dr. Hodge to produce an instance of a single writer, living or dead, who maintains any such nonsense. The very making of the distinction implies that *some* power is several. What *has* been taught, and justly and scripturally taught, is, that the power of *rule*,

[1] Princeton Review for July, 1860, p. 547, and Appendix B to this volume, p. 617.

the *potestas jurisdictionis*, as it is called in the Second Book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland, as contradistinguished from the power of teaching, the *potestas ordinis*, is joint, and not several. But it has always been affirmed that the power of teaching is several, and not joint. There is, consequently, no difference betwixt Dr. Hodge and ourselves on this point. There is no difference in our Church upon it. There *is* a difference, however, upon another point connected with the distinction, but not involving the distinction itself, and that is, whether ordination belongs to the *potestas ordinis* or the *potestas jurisdictionis*—whether, in other words, it is an exercise of joint or several power. Some have contended that it is a ministerial function; others have contended—ourselves among the number—that it is an act of government. But no one has ever maintained that *all* power is joint, and not several. What are we to think of a man who makes such reckless and sweeping assertions, without the slightest foundation in fact? How clear that truth has failed him, when he is compelled to resort to fiction!

Having now completed our examination of Dr. Hodge's revised scheme of Presbyterianism, we are prepared to sum up the result. In the *first* place, his persistent representation of the clergy as an estate in the Church, separate and distinct from the people, and his degradation of the office of Ruling Elder to a lower order than that of the Minister of the Word, are thoroughly *Prelatic*. To this extent, therefore, he is no Presbyterian. In the *second* place, his theory of the right of the people to a substantive part in the government of the Church—thus making them a second estate in the kingdom, and ascribing to them the functions of office-bearers—savours strongly of Independency. It has no smack of Presbyterianism. In the *third* place, his vague notions of the relations of the Spirit to the Church, taken in connection with his celebrated essay on the Idea of the Church, has a striking affinity with Quakerism. His notion of the unity of the Church, as realized through the organization of its courts, is Presbyterian. He is, therefore, a

little of everything, and not much of anything. His true position is that of an ecclesiastical eclectic. He looks out upon all sects with the eye of a philosopher, and as he does not feel himself tied down by the authority of Scripture to any one mode of organization, as he is quite at liberty to make new officers and organs according to the exigencies of the times so long as they do not contradict certain regulative principles, he selects what strikes him as good from all, and casts the bad away.

He comes short of a thorough Presbyterianism—1. By maintaining that the discretion of the Church is limited only by the express prohibitions of the Scripture. His motto is, Whatsoever is not prohibited is lawful. The Church's motto is, Whatsoever is not commanded is unlawful. 2. By making the people and the clergy two distinct estates, between whom the power of government is shared, and by whom it is jointly exercised; whereas, the Church makes the ministry to be only that portion of the people through whom she exercises the various functions of her spiritual ministry. 3. By making *two* orders of spiritual rulers, the Presbyter or Bishop, and the Ruling Elder; whereas, the Church makes only *one* order, which she distributes into two classes—the Teaching and the Ruling Elder. 4. By making the Ruling Elder merely a deputy, to maintain the rights of a particular class; whereas, the Church makes him a representative, a chosen ruler, through whom she herself, and not a class, declares and executes the law of God. 5. By allowing the claim of a *jus divinum* only for regulative principles, and not for the mode of organizing the Church. 6. In order to afford freer latitude and scope for the exercise of discretion in creating new officers and courts, he absolutely repudiates the principle of inference, and denies that what is deduced from the Word of God, by good and necessary consequence, is of equal authority with its express statements. In all these points Dr. Hodge has departed from the faith of our Fathers. His doctrines in respect to these are not the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church. We

have maintained no "new," no "peculiar theory" of Presbyterianism. We have shown that, in all the points enumerated, we are standing upon the ground occupied by the purest Presbyterian Confessors, and especially upon the ground of our own venerable Standards.

To guard against the possibility of misconception, it may be well to say that, while we insist upon the Divine authority of Presbyterian Church Government, we are far from unchurching, or breaking communion with, any evangelical denomination. Government, though Divine, is subordinate to faith in the Gospel. The most precious bonds of communion are inward, and not outward; and those who give evidence that they have been accepted of Christ we are no more at liberty to reject for defects in their government, than for defects in their creed. All Evangelical Churches, moreover, have the essentials of the visible institute of Christ—they have a ministry and ordinances; they have *some*, though not *all*, the officers that He has appointed; they exceed or come short of the complement of rulers, and fail in the details of arrangement. But as long as the Word, in its essential doctrines, is really preached, and the sacraments truly administered, they are true Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be received to our communion and fellowship, as cordially as we receive the private believer who has not yet attained the full measure of knowledge. Our doctrines give no protection to bigotry. We are as consistent in our ecclesiastical fellowship, for example, with the Methodist Episcopal Church, while we reject their peculiar features of government as unlawful and unscriptural, as we are in our Christian fellowship with Methodist believers, while we reject, as grossly contradictory to Scripture, their Arminian creed. We, therefore, unchurch no sect that does not unchurch itself by refusing to hold the Head. We can make the distinction between a defective and a perfect Church—between the essentials and the accidents of government.

While we admit that questions of government are subor-

dinate in importance to questions of faith—mere trifles compared with the great truths of the Gospel as a scheme of salvation—it does not follow that they are of *no* value. Whatever God has thought proper to reveal it becomes man to study. "Everything in its place" is a just maxim, but it by no means implies that comparatively small things are entitled to *no* place. Because church-government is not the great thing, it does not follow that it is nothing. We are as far removed from latitudinarianism as from bigotry. We wish to study the *whole* will of God, and we wish to give everything precisely that prominence which He designs that it should occupy in His own Divine economy. None should be content with striving simply to save their souls; they should strive to be perfect in *all* the will of God. This obligation is an ample vindication of the repeated efforts we have made to explain and enforce the peculiarities of our Church's Divine polity, and to resist all schemes and contrivances in contradiction to the harmony of her system. She will yet awake to a full consciousness of herself. She will yet arise in the energy of a healthful life, and throw off the excrescences which circumstances have gathered around her, and which are not truly of her. She will yet be brought freely to confess that her own wisdom is foolishness, and that her real glory is the strength and light of the Lord. She will take the Word as her sole guide, and renounce all human devices.

In relation to Boards, the subject which has provoked all this discussion, the Free Church of Scotland has led the way in the development of a sound and self-consistent Presbyterianism. At the last meeting of her venerable Assembly, she approved the very changes in the construction of her Schemes, which were *quasi* Boards, that we, at the same time, were pressing upon the Assembly of our own Church. That Assembly has endorsed the principle, that these "Committees shall not hereafter appoint Acting Committees, nor consist of a greater number of members than the Assembly shall deem requisite for the efficient transaction of the mat-

ters committed to their care." The new arrangement could not, at once, be carried into effect; but the Board feature is to be entirely abolished, nothing is to be left but the Executive Committee, and the Assembly is to take the appointment of it in its own hands. This was done in an Assembly of which Robert Buchanan was Moderator, and William Cunningham a member—an Assembly, too, which devoted a whole day to the commemoration of the great principles of the Reformation. With such an inspiration, the result is no marvel. What, on this side of the water, is denounced as *hair-splitting* is considered sound Presbyterianism by as enlightened an Assembly as ever sat in Scotland.

CHURCH-DISCIPLINE.

PREFATORY NOTE.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, meeting at Lexington, Kentucky, in 1857, committed the work of revising the Book of Discipline to Drs. Thornwell, Breckinridge, Hoge, Hodge, Swift, McGill, and Judges Sharswood, Allen and Leavitt. They made a report in 1859 to the Assembly at Indianapolis, which was earnestly debated and then recommitted. In 1860, at Rochester, several other names were added to the Committee. They were empowered to propose modifications of the Form of Government also. The war came on and the Church was divided. At Peoria, in 1862, the Assembly of the Church (North) adopted the first seven chapters with some amendments, but subsequently the whole matter was dropped by that body. The Church (South), at its first General Assembly at Augusta, 1861, appointed a Committee, Dr. Thornwell being chairman, to complete the Revision of the Form of Government, Book of Discipline and Directory also. No meeting of this Committee occurred previous to his decease. The matter is still before our Church.

These articles speak for themselves in explanation of the changes in the Discipline proposed as late as the Assembly of 1860.

THE REVISED BOOK OF DISCIPLINE.

THE Revised Book of Discipline, by having been reported to the last General Assembly, has become, in some sort, the property of the Church; and as its fate will, in all likelihood, be settled by the next Assembly, it is a matter of grave importance that the principles it embodies should be rightly understood, and the grounds and tendencies of the changes introduced in it set in their true light. It has already been subjected to a severe criticism—a criticism extremely kind in its spirit and temper to the authors of the Book, but without the slightest mercy or favour to the peculiarities of the Book itself. The contrast between the courtesy with which the members of the Committee, personally considered, have been treated, and the freedom with which their production has been handled, may be taken as an apt illustration of the genius of Presbyterianism, which teaches charity to the man without concessions to his errors, and which, while it repudiates all human authority, endeavours to observe the maxim, Prove all things, hold fast that which is good. We thank our brethren for the good opinion they have expressed of us. Indeed, our modesty might have been shocked at the laudatory terms which they have permitted themselves to use, had we not felt that the praise was materially qualified by the estimate they have put upon our work. It is very flattering, no doubt, to be called *able* and *wise*, even in the positive degree; but the edge is somewhat taken from the compliment, when in the next breath it is added that these able and wise men have done nothing but blunder. It is a sublime thing to be a mountain, but a mountain labouring to bring forth a mouse has no great

cause of self-congratulation. The brother to whom Robert Hall so warmly expressed his thanks for the benefit he had received from his sermon was highly elated at the moment; but his self-complacency was not likely to be dangerous, when he came to learn that the real secret of the eminent usefulness of his discourse was its transcendent meanness. Our brethren, too, have been very considerate in tempering their praises of us so as not to make them snares to our vanity. They have left us nothing whereof to glory. They have so dexterously mixed the antidote with the poison that we can take their physic without the risk of any serious inconvenience. On one occasion we heard it gravely maintained that the Book was bound to be a bad one, because its authors were very able men. The idea seemed to be that they had a reputation to maintain, and as the burning is an easier road to fame than the building of a temple, they were under a very strong temptation to immortalize their names by the cheap expedient of doing mischief, when they found the prospect very remote of doing any good; to meet and break up and have it said that such men had done nothing was what they were not likely for a moment to brook. We think that we can relieve the minds of our brethren who are troubled on this score. The Committee expected just about the glory they have received. They have erected about as big a monument as they ever expected to raise, and the inscription which their friends have put upon it, though not precisely the one they would like, is precisely the one that they looked for. They had a crazy kettle to mend, and they never aspired to any higher distinction, on account of their labours in this line, than that of respectable tinkers. They thought that they knew where the crack was, and they, perhaps, persuaded themselves that they had succeeded in stopping it. But they were, at the same time, so fully aware of the perverseness of human nature, that they made up their minds, in advance, to hear it gravely alleged, that the vessel went into their hands in a perfectly sound state and left them as leaky as a sieve. Accordingly, the Book is said to

be a failure. It has been condemned, without benefit of clergy, as setting at naught the rules of logic, trampling under foot the most cherished principles of the Church, exposing her to the jeers of enemies, the triumph of rivals, and the pity of her friends; and, to crown all, making it absolutely certain, by its bungling provisions for securing the ends of justice, that in almost every trial prejudice shall rule the hour. The marvel is, how any men with an ordinary share of common sense and common integrity, let alone "wise" and "able" men, could have been betrayed into such self-evident folly. The truth is, we think our critics have made a mistake. The praises which they have bestowed upon the Committee they ought to have given to the Book, and the censures which they have so freely dealt out to the Book we are afraid would not be misplaced if applied to the persons of the Committee, though we confess that we should be very sorry to believe, whatever we may think of ourselves, that our brethren were so fully in possession of the truth. We have hardly yet reached that stage in humility in which we are content that all the world should know how weak and foolish we know ourselves to be. But whatever may be our capacities (we speak as a member of the Committee), whether we belong to the weak and foolish things of the world and things which are not, or to the strong and wise and noble, we insist upon it that the Book is, upon the whole, a good one—that the old cracks in the vessel have been honestly stopped, and that no new ones have been made. We ask our brethren to give us a hearing in behalf of our poor, persecuted bantling.

We propose to indicate and classify the nature of the changes which have been introduced into the new Book, and, as we go along, to discuss the principles which pervade them, and which have rendered some of them so obnoxious to some of our brethren.

I. The first class of changes to which we shall refer consists in the lopping off of redundancies. Short as the old Book is, it is rendered unnecessarily diffuse by a style of

composition altogether unsuited to the nature of the work. Presbyterians are proverbially fond of the sermon, and the old Book bears very decisive marks of this denominational peculiarity. Instead of being simply a book of definitions, of forms and of rules, which a manual of Discipline, as contradistinguished from a Confession of Faith or a manual of Devotion, ought to be, it mixes up with its legal technicalities moral harangues on the importance of the subject, or the necessity of cultivating a right spirit and temper. It stops to preach when it should only prescribe a form of process. What it says is all very good. Only we insist that it is not said in the right place. It would have been just as reasonable to have interspersed an occasional prayer, or to have introduced one or two hymns, by way of encouraging a devotional frame. The doctrine upon which discipline is founded, and the motives with which it should be enforced, must all be presupposed, and the only effect of introducing these matters into a Book of Forms is to swell its dimensions and to increase the difficulty of finding what one wants. If, as the *Edinburgh Review* once suggested to Mrs. Sherwood, the moral had been printed in a different type, the inconvenience would not be so great, as one would then know at a glance what to skip; but it certainly is provoking, when you are in search of a rule, to have to wade through a homily before you can get at it. The new Book has omitted many of these sermons. It has retained enough to authenticate its Presbyterian parentage, and endeavoured to retain them where they were likely to be least annoying. We humbly suggest that this change is a real improvement; and we cannot but think, that he who has mastered the Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Form of Government, will stand in need of no further preaching when he comes to the Compend of Discipline.

The old Book was sometimes very tedious in coming to a point. The new Book has attempted to shorten the process. The whole chapter of New Testimony, which in the old Book occupies nearly two pages and is spread over seven

sections, is in the new Book condensed into a single paragraph, without the sacrifice of a single idea. The Chapter of Actual Process has likewise been materially reduced, with all the advantages of definite and precise statements over wearisome circumlocutions. We mention these as specimens of the changes under this head; and if it is desirable that a manual of Discipline should be brief, pregnant and pointed, we do not see on what ground these changes can be consistently condemned. They might have been carried much further. If the Committee had been preparing out and out a new Book, instead of trying to amend an old one well known and familiar, they would not only have omitted all the sermons and moral harangues, but they would have consulted a still greater brevity and point in the rules and definitions which they retained. But something was due to the familiarity of the Church with old forms of expression, and to the associations of reverence which naturally cleave to a legacy from the past.

II. Another class of changes respects the supply of omissions. The old Book is a curious illustration of the maxim that extremes meet. It often speaks where it ought to be silent, and is silent where it ought to speak. It is even profuse of words where there was no occasion for a single syllable, and as silent as the grave where the occasion demanded an articulate utterance. These omissions the Committee have endeavoured to supply, and no one who has not compared their work, chapter by chapter, and section by section, with the old Book, can form any idea of the contributions which, in this respect, they have made to the logical completeness of the Discipline. These additions may be referred to several heads, which we shall proceed to signalize.

1. The first embraces those cases in which the new Book explicitly enunciates what was contained in the old Book only by implication. For example: the old Book defines *offences*, and proceeds to distribute them, according to their greater or less notoriety, into two classes—public and private. Subsequently another class is introduced—personal offences;

and yet not a word is said in explanation of their nature, or of the grounds of distinction betwixt them and private offences. A two-fold principle of classification is implied, but only one is expressed. The Committee have supplied the omission, and, if they have done nothing more, have at least rendered the Book consistent with itself. So, in relation to prosecutions on the ground of common fame, the old Book implies that the first step shall be to ascertain that a common fame really exists, but it has nowhere made this a law. Yet it is one of those things which ought to have been clearly stated. There have been instances in which rash and malicious men, under the pretext of common fame, have subjected their brethren to vexatious and annoying prosecutions, when the only common fame that existed was the scandal of wicked and suspicious enemies.

But the most important implication of the old Book, to which the new has given a distinct and articulate utterance, is in reference to the great principle of ecclesiastical inquest —that every church-court has the inherent right to demand and receive satisfactory explanations from any of its members concerning any matter of evil report. Nothing has surprised us more than the manner in which this doctrine has been received. It has been branded as "a new principle," as "unjust, hazardous and extra-judicial." "No good," we are told, "can result from this exacting, star-chamber mode of inquiry." Nothing but "mischief" is anticipated "from the revised suggestion." "It has been hitherto unknown to the Presbyterian Church; and no court of law, in a free country, has ever ventured to practise upon it."[1] Now, the simple question is, What is the principle in which the right recognized in "the revised suggestion" is grounded? Nothing more nor less than that the church-courts are the spiritual guardians of the people. Their right to institute process and to inflict censures is founded in the same relation. The Lord has made them overseers of the flock. They must keep their eye upon their charge,

[1] Dr. Van Rensselaer's Remarks, pp. 14, 15.

and the very nature of their trust implies that they have all the power which is necessary to execute it. The Christian people are, in some sort, their children, and as a father has the inherent right to interrogate his children in reference to their conduct, so a church-court has the right to institute inquiries, as well as to sit in judgment upon issues actually joined. It is not an inquisitorial, vexatious, star-chamber power. It is to be exercised in the spirit of love, for the glory of God, and for the honour and good repute of the Church. Every man whose good name has suffered unjustly ought to rejoice in the exercise of it, as it gives him the opportunity of vindicating his character without subjecting him to the shame of being arraigned for crime. The guilty ought to rejoice in it, as it is a means of bringing them to a sense of their sin, and of leading their minds to repentance. We were greatly astonished to find it made an objection to this power, that it might require men to criminate themselves. If they have done wrong, this is precisely what a church-court ought to try to do, and it never will succeed in doing them any good until it reduces them to this point. In spiritual jurisdiction, self-crimination is no evil. In civil courts, it may be the parent of tyranny and injustice; but a spiritual court is for edification, a civil court for justice. A spiritual court aims at producing and fostering a given state of heart; a civil court is for the protection of rights. Spiritual courts are for the religious education and culture of the people—a species of moral schoolmaster; civil courts for the safety and order of the Commonwealth. Spiritual courts can censure, but not punish; civil courts punish without censuring. The spiritual court is entrusted with the keys—the symbol of the power of search and investigation; the civil court is armed with the sword. To reason from the rights of one to the rights of the other is therefore absurd. Cæsar is no model for Christ.

That the principle is no new one, but imbedded in the very nature of spiritual jurisdiction, will be obvious to any one who will reflect but a moment upon the right of a

church-court to cite offenders before it. Whence came that right, and for what purpose does it exist? Is it not obviously one manifestation of the common life of the Church, and one form in which the interest of each in all is signalized? What is the Church but a company of brothers? And are we not our brothers' keepers? But it is replied, that while this common relation is admitted, the only safe mode in which the inherent right of supervision can be exercised is by regular judicial process! That remains to be proved. Indeed, a species of inquest must be resorted to before a court can be put in possession of the facts which justify process. Rumour may charge a man with crime; this rumour must be investigated. Now, is it the doctrine of our brethren, that a court may question, if it chooses, every other man in the community touching the rumour except the only man who is most deeply concerned in it? Has it no right to ask and receive his explanations? Has it no right to exact of him that he shall deal honourably and frankly with it, and that if he has done wrong he shall confess it and repent; and that if he has been injured, his brethren may be placed in a condition to vindicate his name? If this is tyranny, we only wish that there was more of it in the Church; and we shall rejoice to see the day when every Session and every Presbytery shall be a star-chamber after this fashion. The notion that this inquest makes an invidious distinction between the suspected man and his brethren, when they are all, in truth, on a footing of equality, overlooks the fact that the equality has been disturbed by the existence of grounds of suspicion. The parties are no longer on the same moral level, and one design of the inquest is to rectify the change.

Whether new or old, "the revised suggestion" is found almost *totidem verbis* in the Form of Government. In chapter ix. of the Church Session, it is said: "The Church Session is charged with maintaining the spiritual government of the congregation; *for which purpose they have power to inquire into the knowledge and Christian conduct of the mem-*

bers of the church." As all our courts are radically one, they all possess inherently the same powers. What the Session can do in reference to its subjects, every other court can do in reference to those immediately responsible to it. If the right of inquiry is essential to spiritual government, it must inhere wherever a spiritual government is to be maintained.

If now this power is odious and tyrannical, the framers of our Constitution have been guilty of a grievous injustice to the people, and our brethren who denounce the principle chime in with the ancient enemies of Calvin in representing his discipline at Geneva as a shocking and monstrous inquisition into the privacies of individual or domestic life. The terms in which he and his system were reproached, for maintaining the very doctrine which is said to be *new*, are strikingly similar to those in which the revised Book has been assailed—a clear proof that genuine Presbyterianism has the same difficulties to encounter in every age.

2. Another class of omissions, not very infrequent in the old Book, is that of details which experience has shown to be necessary in the execution of its general provisions. We shall mention a few instances. The old Book makes no allusion to the case in which a party accused evades a citation by removal or concealment; yet this is a case from which gross scandal may result, and which ought to be provided for in every sound system of discipline. The new Book supplies the defect. The old Book nowhere requires an issue to be joined—a capital omission in a judicial trial; the new Book insists that the accused shall plead. It makes a case, before it invokes the judgment of the court. The old Book leaves indeterminate what constitutes an appearance in cases of appeal. The new Book gives a precise rule. We think there can be little doubt that these amendments are all for the better. The first must commend itself at once to the common sense of every member of the Church. Scandalous offenders are not to be permitted to outrage the Christian name, and then screen themselves from all testimony against themselves and their crimes by

dodging an officer of the court. The case of a deliberate and open refusal to obey a citation, which the old Book provides for, is not so aggravated as the mean and skulking cowardice which seeks to sin behind a shelter. That an issue ought to be joined is plain to all who are familiar with the history of trials. To say nothing of other advantages, the saving of time is an immense gain. When there is a series of specifications, it may be that all but one shall be admitted; it may be that some are admitted as to the facts, but justified as to the offence; it may be that none are denied, and the issue is joined on the question of crime. Is it nothing to save a court the time and trouble and vexation of proving what the party has not denied, or of entering into matters of fact, when the sole matter is a question of Christian morality? Then, as to an appearance in cases of appeal, what a saving of time, trouble and expense, when the appellant is allowed to appear in writing! And how just is this arrangement to many who can ill afford the means of attending the sessions of the General Assembly! These additions may seem to be minute and trivial, but they are like the pins which hold together the beams of a building; they are the details of justice.

3. To this general head may be referred the omission to provide for the case in which a party confesses his guilt. The idea of hearing argument, examining witnesses, and proceeding through all the formalities of a trial, when the very point to be proved is admitted, is simply absurd. There are those who are so impregnated with the maxims of the common law, that they can scent nothing but tyranny in the doctrine of Christ and His Apostles, that men should confess their sins, and that Christian men should confess them to one another. Proof is necessary only when the facts are denied, and the new Book has recognized a man as a competent witness in his own case, when his testimony is against himself. If he says that he has been drunk, or has lied, or cheated, or committed fornication, the new Book says that you may deal with him as guilty of these crimes.

This strikes us as the verdict of common sense, though we heard it gravely maintained in the last Assembly, that a man's confession of a crime was no satisfactory evidence of his guilt, unless two or three persons had seen him commit it, or circumstances strongly corroborated his assertion.

4. To the same class belongs the case in which an offence is committed in the presence of the court. Trial is unnecessary, when the judges are already in possession of the facts. If the formalities of process should be resorted to, these very judges are the men that must appear as witnesses; and we should be brought back by a circuit to the very point from which we set out. There is certainly no need of trial; there may be need of delay. That is a matter to be determined by the wisdom of the judicatory. The new Book does not require that the judgment shall be instantly rendered; all that it dispenses with is the idle ceremony of appearing to investigate what is perfectly notorious. If the court finds itself in a condition not to pass an impartial and deliberate judgment, it may postpone the matter until its passions have subsided and reason resumes her supremacy. Some cases may be imagined in which the judgment ought to be rendered on the spot—in which the language of indignation is the language of justice, and the only language in which a fitting testimony is uttered against the sin. Other cases might require delay. There is a defect in the provision of the new Book as it was originally adopted, in not giving to the offender the opportunity, if he desires it, of being heard in his defence. This defect was remedied in the late meeting of the Committee at Indianapolis, and the section, as reported to the General Assembly, gives, both to those who confess and those whose sin is in the presence of the court, the privilege of a fair hearing in explanation or extenuation of their conduct. They are at liberty to speak for themselves.[1]

[1] The Committee also altered sec. 1, chap. iv., of the new Book, so that a failure to plead should not, as first proposed, be considered as a confession, but should cause the trial to take place according to the provision in sec. 4.

5. Another omission of the old Book, which the new one supplies, is in reference to the charge of a suspended minister. In the case of a deposed minister the old Book provides that his congregation shall be declared vacant; but the important practical question, whether the suspension of a minister dissolves his pastoral relation to his flock, is left unanswered.

III. A third category, to which changes in the new Book may be referred, pertains to what may be called an extension of privileges. For example, *parties* are permitted to testify; in trials before a Session the accused may employ any communicating member of the Church as counsel, instead of being restricted to members of the court; and gross irregularities in an inferior judicatory may be brought to the notice of the superior by memorial, as well as by common rumour. These changes seem to have received the general approbation of the Church. One of them is so obviously a matter of frequent necessity, and all of them so intrinsically reasonable, that we shall not occupy the time of our readers with any further discussion of their merits.

IV. A fourth class of changes in the new Book consists in the removal of anomalies and incongruities which disfigured the old. The Committee have endeavoured to adjust the system so that the parts shall not only be consistent with one another, but with the Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Form of Government. They have sought, in other words, to make the frame of our Discipline not only coherent and homogeneous with itself, but coherent and homogeneous with the whole scheme of our doctrine and order. The old Book does not hang well together.

1. The first of these changes occurs in the definition of an offence. The old Book either goes beyond the Scriptures, and makes that to be a ground of prosecution and judicial censure which the Word of God neither directly nor indirectly condemns, or is guilty of gross tautology.

It either makes human opinion co-ordinate with Divine authority, or it is a play of words. The whole section in the old Book is: "An offence is anything in the principles or practice of a church-member, which is contrary to the Word of God; *or which, if it be not in its own nature sinful, may tempt others to sin, or mar their spiritual edification.*" The clause in italics is omitted in the new Book. In the first place, it is directly contradictory to the Confession of Faith, if it means to teach that there is any other standard of duty than the Word of God. "The whole counsel of God," is the emphatic language of the Confession, "concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men." Again: "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything, contrary to His Word, or beside it in matters of faith and worship." Now the rejected clause either means that the Word of God, directly or indirectly, condemns those things which, though not inherently wrong, become accidentally sinful, or it does not. If it means this, it is unnecessary. It begins a classification of crimes, and abruptly terminates with a single order. If this is not its meaning, it is wholly un-Presbyterian and un-Protestant. It sets up a new and independent rule of life. In either case, it ought to be rejected. In the next place, as a rule, it is altogether too vague and too susceptible of perversion and abuse. It makes the consciences of others, and not our own, the guide of our actions, and brings us under bondage to others precisely where God has left us at liberty to pursue, according to our own judgment, the law of charity. Who was competent to say, that Paul ought to have circumcised Timothy, and not have circumcised Titus, but Paul himself? One man is offended if a brother happens to take a glass of wine; and we have

known serious scruples about the lawfulness of holding communion with those who played upon a flute. Must the Church censure all who, without recognizing the duty of humouring their follies, chance to be associated with brethren so deplorably weak? The whole case is one outside of discipline; it is a case of liberty, and of liberty to be used for the glory of God and for the real interests of His people; and, as a case of liberty, must be determined by the individual in dependence upon grace. The more complicated the condition of society becomes, and the more diversified the forms which superstition, weakness, or will-worship may assume, the more stringently should the Church feel the obligation to keep exclusively to the Word of God. We have no right to make terms of communion which the Master never made, or to enforce laws which He never knew. Jesus Christ is the only king in Zion—the Bible, the only statute-book He has given to His people, and whatever is beside, or contrary to it, is no part of the faith or duty of the Church.

2. It strikes us as an incongruity in the old Book, that it makes no allusion to the Westminster Standards in determining what constitutes a matter of offence, whether in reference to faith or practice. It refers us at once and exclusively to the Bible, as if we had not already settled as a Church what the Bible teaches on these points, and solemnly agreed to walk together according to this interpretation. The Constitution of the Church is its own sense of the terms of communion prescribed by our Lord, its own sense of what we are alike bound to believe and bound to do. It is under that Constitution that we become a separate and distinct denomination. Obviously, therefore, the Standards of a Church ought to be its immediate appeal, when a member is charged with walking disorderly. Has he transgressed the law, as that Church understands it? This question can only be answered by showing how the Church understands it, and that only by an appeal to its Standards.

A writer in the April number of this Review has objected

to this feature of the new Book—1st, on the ground that the provision is ambiguously expressed, leaving it doubtful whether two Standards are meant, the Bible and the Westminster Formularies, to either of which the appeal may be made in determining an offence, or whether only one is meant—the Westminster Formularies; and, 2dly, on the ground that no human expositions of the ethical teachings of the Bible can contain an adequate rule of life.

As to the first of these objections it is enough to reply, that even if the clause were ambiguous, no possible confusion could arise. If a thing is proved to be wrong directly from the Bible, our Confession of Faith requires us to condemn it. That accepts the whole Word of God as the absolute, authoritative rule of faith and practice. If a thing is shown to be wrong from our Standards, we, as Presbyterians, have declared that it is so taught in the Sacred Scriptures. To us the propositions are identical: Whatever the Bible condemns our Confession of Faith condemns, and whatever the Confession of Faith condemns the Bible condemns. They are the same authority; the Confession is nothing except as the Bible speaks in it and through it; and in adopting it, we have averred it to be an honest and faithful interpretation of God's teachings. If the Bible and the Confession were independent of each other, or were inconsistent with each other, then difficulty might arise. But as long as their relation is that of original and translation, of cipher and interpretation, it is a matter of no moment to which a man immediately appeals. But it certainly is a convenience to have the teachings of the Bible reduced to a short compass, and announced in propositions which are at once accepted without any further trouble of comparing texts.

But, in the next place, we deny that the clause is ambiguous. It admits grammatically of but one possible interpretation. It means, and was intended to mean, that, to us Presbyterians, nothing is heresy which is not repugnant to our Standards of doctrine; and nothing is unlawful

which is not repugnant to our Standards of practice. We have given to the world a creed in which we undertake to condense what God requires us to believe, and what God requires us to do. We have expounded the Law and the Gospel, Faith and Duty, and we have solemnly agreed to accept this exposition as the Constitution of our Church. This creed, in its whole compass, covers all that we believe to be necessary to the salvation and spiritual prosperity of the soul. It is, therefore, the standard by which we are to try and to judge one another.

As to the second objection, we have only to say, that it applies as fatally to the Bible as to the Westminster Formularies. "These Standards," it is said, "do not profess to be exhaustive in their enumeration of disciplinable offences. The circumstances of mankind vary so infinitely, that if a statute-book were to enumerate, specifically, all the offences which will arise in all time, the world would not hold the books which should be written."[1] All this is very true, and, therefore, one would think we are not to look in the Bible for any such chimerical attempt. This is precisely the ground on which Paley has constructed his argument, to show the insufficiency of the Scriptures as a complete rule of practice, and the necessity of supplementing them with philosophical speculations. Paley is certainly wrong, but it is as certainly true that the Westminster Standards are no more at fault, upon this particular point of a complete enumeration of all possible offences, than the Scriptures themselves. How, then, do the Scriptures become a perfect rule? The brother tells us, and tells us very correctly. It fixes general principles, illustrates them by appropriate examples, and gives us the key to the discovery of duty in the complicated relations of life. To do this, it is said, "requires infinite wisdom." Granted. But after infinite wisdom has done it, what is to hinder man from repeating it? If the general principles of the Bible, as found in it, are exhaustive, what prevents the same principles from being

[1] Southern Presbyterian Review, April, 1859, p. 42.

exhaustive when they are transferred to the Larger Catechism? If complete in one place, why not in the other? It is precisely these principles of the Bible, as illustrated by concrete cases, that are embodied in the ethical teachings of our Standards. We have added nothing to them; we have taken nothing from them. We have only collected them from the divers parts of the Sacred Volume in which they are scattered, and reduced them to method and system. But it seems that we are at liberty to deduce necessary inferences from Scripture, but not from the Confession of Faith! Why not? Has the brother to learn that a necessary inference is no addition—that it is part and parcel of the premises from which it is drawn? Does he not remember that all analytical judgments are essentially identical, and that in necessary inference we only explicitly enunciate what was previously implicitly affirmed? This law of inference, therefore, applies to all general propositions wherever they are found, Divine or human, inspired or uninspired. We cannot see, therefore, the force of the objection. If the general rules of the Bible are complete and exhaustive in themselves, they are as complete when collected and arranged by human skill, as when they lie scattered through a multitude of volumes.

3. Another anomaly, which the new Book has abolished, is that of making the inferior courts, in appellate jurisdiction, parties to a new issue. The incongruous nature of our present judicial system is not generally apprehended. In every appeal there are two issues, two sets of parties, and may be two judgments. The secret of this complication is that every appeal not only transfers the case to a higher tribunal, which ought to be its sole legitimate effect, but is construed into an impeachment of the court below, raising an issue in relation to its integrity and judicial fairness. The appellant appears, not only to represent the merits of the case to which he was an original party, but to expose the demerits of the court that refused him justice. He is at once a suitor and a prosecutor. Both issues are tried at the

same time, and so blended that they constitute but one apparent case. Hence the appellant is heard in a double capacity, and the lower court in its own defence; and when the final sentence is rendered, the Book distinctly contemplates that both issues shall be fairly considered, and that the lower court shall be censured if found guilty of mal-administration. Now the complication of two such issues is simply monstrous. To try at the same time, and in the same breath, the question of individual right, and the question concerning the official integrity of a judge, is an outrage upon common sense; and yet this is what the old Book does. The inferior courts are arraigned at the bar of the higher to defend themselves; and it is mercifully provided, that "if they appear to have acted according to the best of their judgment, and with good intention"—that is, if they succeed in showing that they have not been knaves—they may escape with their necks—"they incur no censure." "Yet, if they appear to have acted irregularly or corruptly, they shall be censured as the case may require." What can show more clearly than this passage, that the lower court is on trial for its character? The writer, in the April number of this Review, insists that this must be the case from the very nature of an appeal.[1] "When the individual who was cast, appeals or complains, *against whom*, we pray, does he appeal or complain? Not surely against the accuser (where there is a personal accuser). The complaint is *against the judicatory which cast him;* as he conceives, unjustly. And when his appeal or complaint is entertained by the higher court, what is the thing which is investigated? Is it not *the sentence passed below?* The body appealed from, or complained against, the body whose that sentence was, is surely then a party to the question." In all this there seems to us a singular misconception. The design of the appeal is to transfer the case to a higher court. It removes it from one tribunal to another. The appellant, no doubt, thinks injustice has been done him, but all that he transfers, or

[1] Page 69.

ought to be allowed to transfer, is the identical case upon which the lower court sat. The higher tribunal must have before it precisely what the lower had—the same issue, the same testimony, the same circumstances. The operation of the appeal is nothing more nor less than to introduce the question to another court—it is the removal of the cause. The issue before the higher court is not the sentence of the lower absolutely considered, but relatively to the merits of the case. It is through a full and patient consideration of the case that the final conclusion is reached, either sustaining or reversing that sentence. The principle upon which the law of appeals rests is, that truth and righteousness are likely to be elicited by the care, deliberation and exemption from passion implied in submitting a cause to successive tribunals. One court is a check upon the other, as in representative assemblies one chamber checks another. The thing to be secured is the contemplation of the subject from different points, and aloof from the influences of prejudice and passion. A bill passes the House of Commons, and is sent to the Lords. The Lords may adopt or reject it, but their vote is no censure upon the Commons; it is only a part of the process by which rash and hasty legislation is prevented. So when a case is decided in a lower court, it may be carried to a higher and reversed. This reversal implies no censure upon the lower, but is the result of the system by which the fullest and most impartial consideration is secured to the complaints of every suitor. Appellate jurisdiction is a contrivance of political wisdom for approximating as nearly as possible to the unbiassed verdict of truth and reason. What passes through the successive courts is *the case* that the parties at first made out, and it passes, like a bill, from one chamber to another, and then from both to the supreme executive. Our brother seems to think that the motives of the appellant give us a clue to the real nature of an appeal. No doubt his end is to gain his case; but the end of the system is to do justice. If the appellant's views were to control the matter, there would be no necessity of any court.

If the views which we have given of appellate jurisdiction are correct; if the successive courts are only judges of one and the same case; if it is the case which passes from one to the other; it is clearly preposterous to make the courts pass with the case, and to originate a new case at every step of the transfer. There is a way for trying the lower courts—the old Book provides for it, and the new Book still more completely; but when they are tried, no other issues are mixed up with the process.

As a logical consequence of expunging the features of the old Book which made the lower courts parties, the new Book has also abolished the rule which deprives those members of the upper court that were also members of the lower court of their right to deliberate and vote on questions transferred from the lower to the upper. The denial of this right was grounded in a false assumption touching their relations to these questions. When they are restored to their true position they are restored to all their privileges. That they cannot be ejected from the court, consistently with the laws of Presbyterian government, will be evident from a brief review of the fundamental principles of our system. In some States, appellate courts are composed entirely of new judges; in others they are constituted by a council composed of all the judges in the court below. The end in both cases is to secure the deliberation of different minds. There must be a different body. It is immaterial whether the difference depends upon an absolute difference in the persons of the judges, or upon modifying elements which are likely to introduce new views, to suggest new considerations, and to repress the influence of prejudice and partiality. So fullness and impartiality of consideration are gained, it is of little moment how it is done. Now, in the Presbyterian system, the courts run into one another—all the higher are combinations of the lower. The Presbytery is an union of Sessions; the Synod is an union of Presbyteries; and the General Assembly is, or ought to be, an union of Synods. It is not possible, therefore, to constitute an appellate court

of new and independent materials; the members of the lower, from the very nature of the system, must enter into the higher. The only thing that we can do is to mar the integrity of the system by excluding the members of the lower court, as the old Book has done, in cases of appeal and complaint and general review. To the extent that we do this, we depart from the theory of our polity. Now the question is, Does justice require such departure? Is impartiality more likely to be secured by making the court consist wholly and exclusively of different persons, or by a mingling of the same persons with such a number of others as to make the body really though not absolutely different? To our minds, though the question is not without difficulty, and has embarrassed the wisest legislators, the full working of our own system is, in relation to spiritual causes, a Divine answer. It is well to have the lower court represented, because in that case the views which prevailed in it are likely to be brought out, and when presented in the spirit of judicial deliberation are likely to receive their full measure of consideration. The new members will have their views, and when both sets of opinions are canvassed and discussed, in the love of truth and with a single desire to do justice, the probability is that a righteous sentence will be rendered.

Should it be objected that the judges from the lower court are under strong temptations to forget their duties as judges, and to set themselves as partisans to vindicate their first decision, the answer is threefold:—1. If their opinions, at first, were honestly and dispassionately formed, they are very possibly correct, and no harm will be done, even if they should urge them with some degree of vehemence. If they were not deliberately formed, then these men are not fit to sit in any court, and the argument is as cogent for expelling them from the court below as from the court above. 2. In the next place, the best way to make them partisans, is to treat them as partisans; and the best way to preserve in them the spirit and temper of judges, is to treat them as

judges. Presume them to be honest, and you hold out a motive for being honest. Let them know that the Church trusts them, that it has confidence in their integrity, prudence and impartiality, and they must be desperately corrupt if they do not strive to justify this good opinion. 3. In the third place, to exclude them from the court is not to exclude them from an influence upon its decision. All that you accomplish is to exempt that influence from all responsibility. They have tongues, and their brethren have ears, and who is to hinder them from whispering in the lobby of the court? The real question, therefore, is between a responsible and an irresponsible influence. One or the other, from the very nature of our system, we must have. It is not enough to eject the members of the lower tribunals from the house. We must send them home, or rather prevent them from coming to the appellate court.

But, after all, this dread of prejudice and partisanship is not justified by the experience of the Church. It is a rare thing that any man, under the solemn sanctions of judicial responsibility, perverts judgment; and surely in religious assemblies corrupt judges must be the exception and not the rule.

Our brother, in the April number of this Review, contends that the court should be composed exclusively of new judges, because—if we understand his argument—that is what the appellant expects. If the wishes of the appellant, as we have already intimated, are to determine the organization of the court, the problem would very soon be solved. We apprehend, too, that he would care very little of what judges it was composed, provided they were favourable to him. At any rate, we doubt very seriously whether, if it should so happen that none of the judges of the lower court were present but those who voted on his side, he would enter his protest against their sitting, as a mockery of justice. His feelings and his wishes should have no influence in the matter. He might prefer entirely different judges, but if that arrangement should not seem to be most

conducive to the ends of justice, his preferences must be disregarded.

It has been further objected to the rule of the new Book that, under it, cases may happen in which the lower court really determines the decision of the upper. In the first place these are extreme cases, and must be very rare. And even were this an evil, it must be remembered that no system can provide against all inconveniences. Under the present Book, the highest court of the Church has been on the eve of making itself supremely ridiculous by contradictory decisions upon the gravest matter, involving the very essence of the Gospel, and that at the very same sessions. The same court, almost in the same breath, was nearly made to say that white was black and black was white. In the case of Dr. Beecher, when the New School Synod of Cincinnati was out of the house, and the great orthodox Synod of Philadelphia in the house, the Assembly was prepared to be true to its doctrines; in the case of Mr. Barnes, when the Synod of Philadelphia was out of the house, it betrayed the cause of its Master. Here the decision of the court was a greater evil than all the inconveniences likely to result from the new Book. But we are not prepared to admit that the extreme case which our brethren have put is an evil. If the lower court was a large one and its decision nearly unanimous, or by a large majority, the presumption is that the decision was right. A numerous Presbytery, covering an extensive range of country, is not likely to be misled by prejudice or passion in a case in which very few of them can feel a personal interest, or be seduced by local considerations. They took it up in the spirit of judges of a Court of Jesus Christ—they knew nothing of it until issue was joined before them. Why should their verdict be suspected? If it were a case of general interest, and one likely to enlist the passions of the Presbytery, it would be incredible that the other Presbyteries of the Synod should fail to be present, if they were persuaded that the original judgment was wrong. But take

the extremest supposition—this large Presbytery rules the Synod. The remedy is at hand—no single Synod has a preponderating influence in the General Assembly. We do not see, therefore, that any mischief can result from the new rule. It preserves the symmetry of our system, diminishes the motives to partiality and prejudice, represses the exercise of an irresponsible influence, and secures the fullest consideration and the widest comparison of views. It treats our Ministers and Elders as honest men, and does not allow a brand to be put upon their characters because an appellant is not content with their decision. It supposes that they were upright judges in the court below, and presumes that they will be equally upright in the court above.

These two changes in relation to the posture of the lower courts have greatly simplified our process of appellate jurisdiction. They have settled the everlasting controversy about *original parties*, they have abolished the long speeches of the lower courts, and they have rendered clear as noonday the whole order of proceedings. Those who have witnessed the confusion, embarrassment and waste of time occasioned by the anomalies of the old Book, can appreciate the value and importance of the changes. Three judicial cases were tried before the last Assembly, and there was not a difficulty in which the house was involved—and it was often involved in difficulty—that could possibly have arisen if the new Book had been in force. A prominent member of the Assembly, and one by no means favourable to the revision, candidly acknowledged to us that in the matter of judicial proceedings the new Book was almost absolutely perfect.

V. There yet remain to be considered three provisions of the new Book, two of which are confessedly innovations, while the other belongs to the category of omissions. We shall begin with it. We allude to the rule in relation to an application to withdraw from the communion of the Church. That this is a case not provided for in the old Book will be manifest to every one who calls to mind, that

the only instance in which it makes confession a ground of conviction is the case of a minister of the Gospel, and there the confession is supposed to take place after the charges have been tabled—it is a part of the pleading. Here the offender is not a minister, but a private individual; here there is nothing in the life to be the basis of a charge; the offence is known only to the guilty person and his God, and, without his own confession, his name might stand as fair as that of any other man in the Church. The unbelief of the heart must be manifested by overt acts, or, in the sense of the old Book, it is not an offence susceptible of discipline. It cannot be reached. There are no witnesses to prove it, and confession is not admissible. The guilty individual may, indeed, abstain, as while he is in an unconverted state he ought to abstain, from the sacrament of the Supper. He may be arraigned and suspended for *this* irregularity; but the charge of abstaining from the Lord's Supper is a very different thing from the charge of not being converted. We aver, then, that the old Book makes no provision for the case. And yet the experience of the Church has shown that some provision is needed. The Committee, therefore, assumed no supererogatory task, when they undertook, according to their best judgment, to supply the omission. Is their remedy a wise one? We have examined carefully all the objections that have been raised against it, and we do not recollect to have seen one which was not founded in radical misconception. The rule has been represented as giving men a right to withdraw from the Church at pleasure; as releasing them from their solemn covenant obligations; as reducing the Church to the condition of a voluntary society into which men go, and from which they depart, when they choose; as putting an end to all discipline by affording a convenient shelter of retreat from it; and, worst of all, as sanctioning the notion that unbelief is no sin, but that a frank and manly confession of it entitles the reprobate to special indulgence.

Whether men, under any circumstances, have a right to

withdraw from the Church is a grave question, and a question which cannot be answered without a precise definition of terms. If the meaning be whether they can apostatize without sin, whether God holds men guiltless for abjuring His authority and His Son, the answer is plain as day. As before Him, they have no right, and to concede it to them is to confound the eternal distinctions of guilt and righteousness. But if the question be, whether men have a right to prevent them from announcing their apostasy—and that is the true aspect of the question in relation to the Church—the answer may be different. If a man has renounced his God and Saviour in his heart, for the Church to disclaim the right to interpose and say You shall not renounce the profession of your faith, is a very different thing from legitimating either act.[1] The right of a man to do a thing, and the right of others to hinder him, are entirely distinct, and yet, from the poverty of language, we are often compelled to represent the non-right of others to hinder as his right to do. It is a right only in relation to them—only in the sense that they are bound not to interfere. But important as this question of withdrawal is, the Committee have not touched it; the rule, on the contrary, is directly against the possession of any such absolute right. In the first place, the unconverted offender is distinctly treated as guilty of an offence. It is a case without process; the process is superseded by confession—the man is convicted upon his own showing. This surely does not represent him as unblamable and unreprovable in the eye of the court. The offence, moreover, is just as distinctly unbelief—not being converted. Now, the rule prescribes a penalty to be inflicted by the court. The man does not withdraw, but the Session is required to deal with him according to his guilt. What is the penalty? It is exclusion, judicial exclusion, from the communion of the Church for an indefinite time.

[1] Dr. Thornwell, in the glow of composition, left this sentence obscure. For "whether the Church has a right" we have ventured to put "for the Church to disclaim the right."—[EDITORS.]

This is the plain import of striking his name from the roll of communicating members. A definite suspension would be absurd, because he can never be restored to the communion until he gives evidence of a change of heart; excommunication would be too harsh, as it might repel him from all those influences under which his continued connection with the Church would probably still keep him. The only thing to be done is to say, that he can no longer be a communicating member—he must take his place with the other baptized persons who are not yet prepared to redeem their vows to God. It is presumed, of course, that the Pastor and Session will deal with him frankly and honestly, that they will endeavour to impress him with a sense of his grievous guilt and of his awful danger, and that they will earnestly exhort him to seek at once the reconciliation of his heart with God. But, as the new Book was not commissioned to preach, it contented itself with prescribing the manner in which such cases—alas! too common—should be dealt with. Before this simple exposition every objection vanishes into air. No leave is given to withdraw from the Church, for the man does not withdraw; there is no release from covenant obligations, for the man is treated as an offender for not fulfilling them—no evasion of discipline, because discipline is actually exercised; the guilty party is solemnly, and by the sentence of a court of Jesus Christ, excluded from the fellowship of the saints, because the love of God is not in him. The sentence, too, is an awful one, the most awful that can be pronounced on earth save that of excommunication.

2. The change which has provoked most opposition is that in relation to the baptized, non-communicating members of the Church. A hue and cry has been raised against us as though we had ruthlessly turned the lambs of the flock head and heels out of the fold, and sent them to wander on the mountains, and left them a prey in the wilderness. We are denounced as having struck a blow at the root of infant baptism more terrible and fatal than any which our Anabaptist brethren have been able to administer. We are

amazed at the mischief we have done. And we should have no comfort, did we not believe that the ghosts which have frightened our brethren are the spectres of their own troubled fancies. We think it can be shown that the new rule has put the children in a better condition than it found them, has put infant baptism upon a higher ground than it occupied before, and has solved a question in relation to which the perplexity of Pædobaptist churches has been a standing scandal. We think that the tables can be turned, and that it can be conclusively shown that the mischief is all on the side sustained by our brethren, and the good on our own. The core of the question is, whether church-membership necessarily involves subjection to judicial prosecution. It is admitted, on all hands, that these baptized persons are members, *bona fide* members, of the Church. The new rule asserts this as positively as the old. It is alleged by our brethren that, if members, they must be liable to process. It is not a question whether they are under the government, guardianship and training of the Church, or whether they are under its *discipline*, in the wide and comprehensive sense of that term, as including the whole process of moral and spiritual education—this also the new rule positively asserts. It omits the word *discipline*, because that term in a manual of forms and processes would convey the narrow idea of judicial investigation, but it retains the thing as completely as equivalents can express it. The sole point, therefore, is whether the class of members in question can be cited, tried and condemned for offences; or, in the words of the Book, are the proper subjects of judicial prosecution. It is said that they must be, or their church-membership is purely nominal. Now, subjection to discipline—we use the word in its narrow sense—is either a privilege, or it is not. If it is a privilege, the argument of our brethren assumes either that church-membership carries with it a right to all privileges, or that there is something peculiar in this privilege which makes it universal. Upon the first assumption, they are clearly at fault, as these same persons are excluded

from the privilege of the Lord's Table. If all church-members are entitled to all privileges, then all church-members have a right to communicate. If exclusion, on the contrary, from the Lord's Table does not contradict church-membership, why should exclusion from discipline contradict it? The argument in this form proves too much, and therefore proves nothing. The universal proposition on which it rests is clearly false. If, on the other hand, there is something in the nature of judicial prosecution which requires it to be an universal privilege, the peculiarity ought to be pointed out; and that has not been attempted. All that our brethren have achieved in the way of argument has been to repeat the syllogism: All church-members are entitled to all church-privileges; the persons in question are church-members; therefore, they are entitled to all privileges. But let us suppose that discipline is not a privilege, but a disability. What is there in the nature of church-membership which makes it inconsistent to exempt a certain class from a specific disability? Must all be subject to precisely the same conditions—to the same pains and penalties? If some members of the Church can be excluded from a privilege to which others are entitled, without prejudice to their church-membership, why may they not be exempted from a penalty to which others are exposed, without jeopardy to their relations to the Church? Surely the argument is suicidal, which reasons from the naked fact of church-membership to the other fact of subjection to discipline, as it would equally conclude in favour of a right to the Lord's Table.

The truth is, in every Commonwealth there may be peculiar privileges and peculiar disabilities. Rights and privations may alike be conditioned by the qualifications and characters of the subjects. It is so in the Church. All are not entitled to be made Ministers, Ruling Elders or Deacons; these are privileges which belong to special qualifications. All are not entitled to the privilege of the Lord's Supper; that also depends upon a special qualification—the ability to

discern the Lord's body. Now, if it should appear that subjection to judicial process involves also a special condition, then it would follow that this also, call it *disability* or *privilege*, cannot be universal. Now, we contend that it does imply just such a condition—that to those who profess no faith in Christ it is as unmeaning and absurd to dispense the spiritual censures of the Church, as it would be to tie a dead man to the whipping-post and chastise him with rods. The possession or non-possession of faith divides the Church into two classes so widely apart, that it is simply ridiculous to think of treating them in the same way. The great end which the Church is to aim at, in reference to the former, is their edification, their growth in grace, their continued progress in the Divine life. What it primarily seeks, in relation to the latter, is their conversion to God. One class is already alive, and are to be dealt with as living men; the other is dead, and the whole scope of spiritual effort is to bring them to Him who can quicken the dead. Discipline is for the living and not for the dead. It is not an ordinance for conversion, but an ordinance for repentance. Its design is to recover the fallen, to arrest the backslider; it is the rod with which the Shepherd gathers the scattered sheep who have strayed from the fold. It is the solemn caveat against their sins which God has directed his Church to utter in the ears of His erring people. Our brethren have perpetrated two mistakes in reference to the nature and ends of discipline. In the first place, they regard it as a punishment of the offender. This is a serious error. There are no punishments in the Church of God. It is founded upon a dispensation of grace and not of law; and discipline is a merciful provision, a kind and fatherly chastisement by which a son, not a slave, is made sensible of his follies. It is not the act of a judge pronouncing on the intrinsic demerit of the crime and giving the award of justice, but the voice of a parent employing just such tones of rebuke as are likely to arrest attention. When men show by their contumacy that they are not sons, they are then cut off from the Church,

on the very ground that they are incapable of discipline. Excommunication is, in its last analysis, a solemn declaration that the professions of the party which brought him under discipline are false, and that he who was mistaken for a sheep has turned out to be a wolf. It is the act of separating from discipline him who is not qualified to profit by it.

The other error is, that judicial process is a means of conversion. That God might bless it to that end, as He can overrule any providence, we are not disposed to deny, but that He has appointed it for that end in His Word is more than has yet been proved. Not a case can be found in the New Testament in which the subjects of censure were not regarded as professing brethren.

There is, therefore, no logical inconsistency in exempting non-communicating members from judicial prosecution. On the contrary, if faith is an indispensable condition of the benefit of discipline, the paralogism would be in making them subject to it.

What, then, it may be asked, is the real relation of these persons to the Church? What is the significance, or what the value, of their membership? We answer, in the terms of the new rule, They are under its government and training. We answer, in the terms of our Directory, "They are under the inspection and government of the Church, and are to be taught to read and repeat the Catechism, the Apostle's Creed and the Lord's Prayer. They are to be taught to pray, to abhor sin, to fear God and to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. And when they come to years of discretion, if they be free from scandal, appear sober and steady and to have sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord's body, they ought to be informed it is their duty and their privilege to come to the Lord's Supper." But if they are not free from scandal, nor sober, nor competent to discern the Lord's body, what then? The silence of the Book evidently implies that they are to stay where they are; they are still to be pressed with the motives and claims of the Gospel, but no government is to be exercised over them except that which

looks to their conversion. This, as we understand it, is the doctrine of the Directory, and it is the clear common-sense view of the case. They are brought into the Church as a school in which they are to be trained for Christ; and they are kept as pupils until they have learned the lesson they were set to acquire. And as their relation to the Church is through their parents, the Church exercises its watchful care over them in their infant years through the family. It exacts of their parents that they shall bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and maintain a Christian inspection over their deportment and habits. When they are released from parental government, the Pastor and Elders and all the faithful followers in Christ are to bring to bear every proper influence in leading them to recognize their solemn obligations to the Saviour. The thing to be aimed at is, as we have said, their conversion, and whatever power is exerted must be exerted with reference to that end. From the circumstance that they are not professors of religion, their irregularities bring no scandal upon the Church. They do not claim to be in Christ, and their excesses are consequently no reproach to His name.

But it may be said that the Church owes these duties to all sinners, and that these baptized persons have no advantage over the rest of the world. This, however, is a grievous error. Their baptism has brought them, as contradistinguished from others, into the same relation to the promises of the covenant into which circumcision brought the Jew as contradistinguished from the Gentile. To them belong, in a special sense, the Oracles of God, and "to them pertain the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." They can plead the promises as an unbaptized sinner cannot plead them. God is nigh to them for all that they call upon him for. The Scriptures evidently distinguish unbelievers into two great classes—those who are *nigh*, and those who are *afar off*. These terms do not express, so much, differences of moral character as different relations to the

covenant. In the time of the Saviour the Jew was nigh, the Gentile was afar off, though the Gentile might have been, and often was, a better man than the Jew. But the Jew was nearer to God—he was consecrated by covenant adoption. In the present age, the baptized unbelievers are nigh, and the unbaptized afar off. The Gospel must be preached to all; but, as in the beginning it was *first* to the Jew and *then* to the Gentile, first to the nigh and then to those afar off, so now it must first be preached to the baptized and then to the unbaptized. The bread must first be given to the children and then to the dogs. The covenant is the birthright of the seed of believers. If, then, it be asked, What profit is there of baptism? we answer, Much every way. And, in point of fact, the whole history of the Church is a glorious illustration that baptism is not an idle ceremony—that the privileges to which it entitles are, in innumerable cases, sealed to its subjects. Then, too, what an argument does it put into the mouths of God's servants in pressing upon baptized unbelievers the Saviour's claims! The vows of God are upon them, they have been consecrated to the Lord; and when they pervert their faculties and strength to the service of themselves or the world, they are guilty of a more aggravated profaneness than could have been imputed to the Jew, if he had gone into the temple and taken the vessels of the sanctuary and perverted them to his private use. What an appeal lies in this consideration! Then, the value of their privileges, the nearness of God to them, the significance of their baptism—what motives are here! To this must be added the enormity of guilt which they contract by unbelief. They cannot sin like other sinners. They cannot be exalted to Heaven and then expect a gentle fall. Is it nothing to be in a situation to be addressed by arguments and motives and considerations like these? Beyond controversy it is a great privilege to be a member of the visible Church; and beyond controversy the despising of such a birthright is no common crime.

Let us contrast with this view of the case that taken by our brethren. They would have these persons when they arrive at years of maturity, if they have resisted all private and personal efforts for their conversion, duly cited and arraigned to show cause why they have not given their hearts to God. If, after repeated admonitions and counsels and prayers, they have persisted in impenitence, they are to be solemnly excommunicated and their relation to the Church as absolutely abolished as if they had been born heathens and publicans. Now, what will be the effect, the inevitable effect, of such proceedings? Some it would make hypocrites—they would come to the Lord's table and put on a show of religion to avoid the annoyance of this species of discipline; some would treat the whole thing with contempt; and others would be exasperated against the very name of the Church. The thing is so revolting that no living, spiritual Church has ever attempted to carry it out. The theory suits only that condition of things when there is no real faith, and when formal observances are all that distinguish the professor of religion from other men. The tendency would be to bring about just this state of things. The Church would be made up of decent professors without grace. We should soon have the reign of Moderatism. The effect, too, in bringing infant baptism into disrepute, by making it the badge of what many would consider a disgraceful bondage, deserves to be seriously weighed by those who appreciate the importance of the ordinance.

Others, to avoid the difficulties connected with discipline, maintain that these persons are self-excommunicated—that their continued impenitence is an actual renunciation of their church-membership. And yet the very persons who teach this doctrine are loudest in the clamour against the right of a poor, self-deceived sinner to withdraw. Excommunication can only be pronounced by a court, and that is a sufficient answer to the theory.

The doctrine of the Committee is encumbered with none of these difficulties. It is consistent with itself, consistent

with the nature of infant baptism, and defines intelligibly and scripturally the status of these people. The Church of God, as a visible external institute, is made up of two classes of members. This results from the very nature of its organization through families. One class consists of true believers, or those who profess to be such; the other of their children who are to be trained for God, and for that purpose are blessed with pre-eminent advantages. They are to be retained as pupils until they are converted. If they should continue impenitent, the Church does not revoke their privileges, but bears with them as patiently as her Master. They are beloved for the fathers' sake. This host of baptized children is, however, the source from which her strength is constantly recruited. The Church contains a sanctuary and an outer court. True believers are in the sanctuary, others in the outer court, and the sanctuary is constantly filled from the court. Our brother, in this Review, is grievously mistaken when he says that the idea which lies at the basis of the new rule is, "that it is unreasonable to exercise a church-government over a man to which he has not given his own voluntary assent." The idea is, that it is unreasonable to exercise a kind of government wholly unadapted to his condition and circumstances—it is unreasonable to treat a child like a man, a sinner like a saint, an unbeliever like a professed follower of Christ. The Reviewer has more than once used language which implies that the rule abolishes *all* exercise of government in relation to the persons in question. For example: "If we roundly assert, as even the Revised Discipline does, that all baptized persons are members of the Church, we see little consistency in then exempting a large class of them from its government." But who has done that? Not the new Book; for that expressly asserts that they "are under its government and training." The only thing from which it exempts them is a particular species of government, for which they are not yet prepared. But we have said enough upon this point to put the reader in possession of the grounds

and spirit of the change. We believe that it exactly represents the feeling of the Church, and that it has only to be understood to be generally and cordially adopted.

The only other change which we might be expected to notice—the change in relation to the competency of witnesses—as it has elicited no censure, and seems to be in keeping with the progress of civil jurisprudence, we shall pass without comment.

Upon the whole, we are prepared to commend the new Book as a real improvement upon the old. It has pruned away redundancies and supplied many important omissions; removed incongruities and contradictions to the general tenor of our system; extended privileges which experience has shown to be important; cleared up ambiguities; and, reduced our Discipline to a logical completeness and coherence which it did not profess before. It has simplified the process of appellate jurisdiction, and cleared a high way for our upper courts where all before was rocks and thorns. We do not say that the Book is perfect; but we do say that it is a better Book than the old one, and, therefore, worthy of adoption by the Church. Candour, however, compels us to acknowledge that, in our judgment, it is marred by one remarkable incongruity. The section on Appeals is out of harmony with the principle on which the specific difference of the various modes in which a cause may be removed from a lower to a higher court depends. We have four methods of removal. The distinction between these does not depend upon the nature of the cause, or the effect of the transfer, but upon the *parties* who bring the matter to the attention of the higher court. When the higher court itself, by virtue of its own inherent power of inquest, brings the matter before it, we have then a case of Review and Control. Here it is evidently *the party originating the inquiry* which determines the nature of the remedy. When a lower court transfers a matter, either for advice or decision, we have a case of Reference—*the party presenting the cause* to the higher court being still the differential idea. The Com-

plaint is the remedy of any man whose zeal for the glory of God and the prosperity of His kingdom prompts him to seek the redress of errors and irregularities in any of the subordinate tribunals—the *party* being still the differential idea. In consistency with this idea, the Appeal ought to have been exclusively a remedy for personal grievances, and confined to an *injured party*. Had this restriction been made, the system would have been logically complete.

The effect of an appeal in arresting all further proceedings is not a part of its specific difference, but the natural consequence of the relation of the parties. They are presumed to be *injured*. Their rights have been invaded, and until this point is settled, it is manifestly fit that no further steps should be taken. A man may be trusted with the care of his own personal immunities, and his judgment on that point should be respected until it is proved to be wrong. The case is different with questions of general interest. One man there is as competent a judge as another, and it is highly inexpedient to leave it in the power of a few to clog the wheels of the Church upon mere abstract differences of opinion. Thus much we have felt bound to say. But the abatement is a trifle compared with the advantages which the new Book offers. Even with this defect, our system is well-nigh perfect. Every member of the Church has free access to our higher courts, and, if wrong is done, the whole Church is to blame if redress is not sought and obtained.

THE REVISED BOOK VINDICATED.

FROM recent indications, we are inclined to think that the tide of prejudice, which at first set so violently against the Revised Book of Discipline, has begun to ebb, and that the current is now changing in its favour. Objections are daily losing their force, misapprehensions quietly subsiding, and the propriety of the changes becoming more obvious; and although the mind of the Church is not yet fully prepared to adopt the book, yet the estimate which is now formed of it is very different from that which prevailed a year ago. Even the tone of its assailants is significantly changed. Instead of the bold shout of confident defiance with which they at first rushed to the assault, as if victory were as sure as the attack, they have come at length to perceive that there are weapons on the other side as bright and as keen as their own, and that if they succeed in achieving a triumph it will be after a hard conflict, and with strong misgivings as to the inherent righteousness of their cause. In this posture of affairs, we have thought that an additional impetus might be given to the healthful reaction which has certainly begun, by a few more words in relation to those parts of the New Discipline which are still not free from difficulty, and of which a fuller discussion is needed. We are persuaded that much of the opposition which still lingers in the popular mind is due to misapprehension, that the subject is not completely understood, and that more light cannot fail to be productive of more harmony. We do not know that we can impart this light, but we feel it our duty to attempt to present this subject before others precisely as it lies in our own minds; and if we succeed in getting them to

see it with our eyes, we shall further succeed, either in bringing them to our conclusions, or in placing definitely before them the points on which we need to be corrected. We shall either set them right, or put it in their power to set us right; and in either case the cause of truth will be subserved.

I. The part of the Book which has given least satisfaction is that which defines the proper subjects of judicial prosecution. Many, who are prepared to adopt the other changes without modification, boggle and hesitate here. They suspect a lion in the way; they seem to fear that, in being called upon to abandon a crotchet of yesterday which perverse logic, and neither reason nor the Word of God, has foisted into our Discipline, they may be ensnared to renounce a portion of that venerable heritage of truth bequeathed to them by the fathers of the Reformation. The opponents of the new principle—as for the sake of distinction we will permit it to be called—remind us of two prevaricating witnesses whose conflicting testimony establishes, beyond doubt, that, whatever may be the truth, *they* are wrong. In one quarter it is assailed as a weak and timid concession to libertines, an unmanly shrinking from duty through fear of consequences. In another it is represented as a vain effort to realize the Puritan conception of the Church, in which the wheat is kept separate from the tares, and the tares bound in bundles to be burnt. The new Book, accordingly, is at once too loose and too strict—veering equally, and at the same time, to the contradictory extremes of licentiousness and sanctimony. Both objections cannot be valid, and the presumption is, that it occupies that safe middle ground in which the truth generally lies. This we shall now endeavour to show. We shall attempt to demonstrate that the new principle is not only right in itself, but has been universally acknowledged by the Reformed Church, and articulately stated by some of its ablest Theologians. If we can make out these points, we shall certainly exonerate the Committee from the charge of introducing novelties,

and commend the change to the conscience of the Church. Before proceeding to the argument, let us advert, briefly, to the state of the question.

It is not whether baptized persons are members of the Church—that is conceded on all hands; nor is it whether they are bound to perform all the duties of members—that is asserted as expressly in the new Book as in the old; nor is it even whether they are subject to the government and jurisdiction of the Church—that, also, is freely admitted; but the precise question is, whether the jurisdiction of the Church is to be exercised over them, as over professed believers, in the way of judicial prosecution. The question is not, whether the Church shall assert in relation to them, as well as to the saints, the supremacy of the laws of Christ, but whether she shall assert it in the same way. It is purely a question concerning the mode of dispensing her discipline. The new Book restricts the mode of judicial prosecution exclusively to professed believers. Its opponents contend that the same mode should be indiscriminately applied to all church-members, without respect to the profession or non-profession of faith. We wish the state of the controversy to be distinctly understood as involving a question, not concerning the authority of the laws of Christ, but concerning the manner in which that authority should be enforced. This precise elimination of the issue reduces at once to a frivolous paralogism all attempts to deduce subjection to judicial prosecution from the mere fact of church-membership. That only necessitates subjection to the laws, but determines nothing as to the mode in which the laws shall be administered. As well maintain that every member of the Commonwealth, whether bond or free, must be tried in the same way and by the same court, as that every member of the Church must be subject to the same form of process. His membership, in itself considered, only brings him under the jurisdiction and authority of the Church. The mode in which she shall exercise her power depends upon other considerations. It is strange that any human

being should persuade himself that he was proving subjection to judicial prosecution, when he was only proving subjection to law; and still stranger, that any one could imagine, with the language of the new Book before him, that the Committee of Revision ever meant to exempt any class of church-members from the obligation of performing all church-duties. It is idle to undertake to deduce the mode of treatment from the naked fact of church-membership. The ruling consideration must be the condition of the persons to whom the law is to be applied. Their ecclesiastical status must determine the manner in which they are to be dealt with. The freeman and the slave, though subject to the same law, are very differently treated.

Now we maintain, and the new Book maintains, that the profession or non-profession of faith makes such a difference in the ecclesiastical status of church-members, that it would be absurd to apply indiscriminately to both classes the same form of discipline; that the mode of judicial prosecution is proper for believers, but altogether inconsistent with the status of avowed unbelievers. The first question is, What is that status? To answer this question we must revert to first principles. The two classes of which the Church consists are not equally related to the idea of the Church. The class of professors pertains to its essence; that of non-professors is an accidental result of the mode of organization. There can be no Church at all, where there is no professed subjection to the authority of Christ; there may be a Church, and in the millennium there perhaps will be a Church, in which all are saints. Make every baptized unbeliever a true disciple of Christ, and you do not mar the integrity of the Church; remove all who have professed to be believers, and you destroy the Church as a visible institute. If the non-professing element is not essential to the idea of the Church, the question may be asked, How does it get there at all? The answer is, That it results from the mode of its organization, and the circumstance of non-profession is, in the logical sense, simply *accidental*. The

profession of the parent carries his household with him—the Church, like the State, is composed of families. It is not, as Owen has strikingly observed, "like the kingdom of the Mamalukes, wherein there was no regard unto natural successors, but it was continually made up of strangers and foreigners incorporated into it; nor like the beginning of the Roman commonweal, which, consisting of men only, was like to have been the matter of one age alone."[1] If it be asked, why the Church embraces the family, and is not restricted to professing individuals, the answer is plain. The children of the faithful are the heirs apparent of the promises. God has graciously promised to show mercy unto thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments; the decree of election runs largely in their loins, and through their faithfulness in rearing a holy seed, the Church is perpetuated, and new recruits are constantly added to the communion of saints. They are all incorporated into the Church, because many of them hereafter are to be of the Church. Mankind, according to these principles, is divided into three great classes: 1. The true children of God, among whom alone exists the genuine communion of saints; 2. Those whom we have ventured to call the *heirs apparent* of the kingdom, to whom pertain, what Calvin calls the outward adoption, and a special interest in the promises of the covenant; 3. Strangers and aliens, who, though not excluded from the general call of the Gospel, are destitute of any inheritance in Israel. This class is properly called the *world*. In relation to the second class, it is clear that while they are in the Church by external union, in the spirit and temper of their minds they belong to the world. Like Esau, they neither understand nor prize their birthright. Of the world and in the Church—this expresses precisely their status, and determines the mode in which the Church should deal with them.

As in the Church, and in the Church as heirs of promises which they have not yet embraced, they are to be trained to

[1] Works, vol. xx., p. 368.

a proper sense of their privileges, to be instructed in a knowledge of their duty, and induced and persuaded by every lawful influence to accept the grace which has been signified and freely offered in their baptism. They have been externally consecrated to God, and the Church is to seek that they may be likewise inwardly sanctified. Her peculiar obligations to teach and to persuade them grow out of their visible connection with her. They are born unto her as children, and as children, the great duty she owes to them is to educate them. But in heart and spirit they are of the world. In this aspect, how is she to treat them? Precisely as she treats all other impenitent and unbelieving men—she is to exercise the power of the keys, and shut them out from the communion of the saints. She is to debar them from all the privileges of the inner sanctuary. She is to exclude them from their inheritance until they show themselves meet to possess it. By her standing exclusion of them from the Lord's table, and of their children from the ordinance of Baptism, she utters a solemn protest against their continued impenitence, and acquits herself of all participation in their sins. It is a standing censure. Their spiritual condition is one that is common with the world. She deals with them, therefore, in this respect, as the Lord has directed her to deal with the world. They are distinguished from the world by a special relation to the covenant. She deals with them according to this relation, by striving to make them comprehend their calling. She presses the peculiar obligations which spring from their baptism, and warns them of the aggravated doom of those who perish with the seal of the covenant on their brows. It is overlooked by those who insist upon the judicial prosecution of this class of members, as if judicial prosecution were the only conceivable mode of discipline—it is overlooked or forgotten, that exclusion from the communion of the faithful *is* discipline. It is an authoritative exercise of power, retaining its subjects in the position which is suited to their character. The teacher who refuses to promote a

pupil as really exercises discipline as if he had flogged him for his idleness.

There is, however, a very palpable incongruity in subjecting non-professors to judicial prosecution. As in that mode of discipline the charges must be specific, and particular offences signalized, there is a tacit implication that, in other respects, the conduct of the accused is blameless. You single out certain actions, and say these are wrong and must be punished. You imply that, but for these actions, the agent might be reputed a worthy member of the Church. Now, can the Church hold such language in regard to those whom she knows to be dead in trespasses and sins? Is not their whole life a continued sin? Are not their very righteousnesses abominable before God? Repentance to them is not the abandonment of this or that vice; it is the renunciation of the carnal heart, which is enmity against God: and, until they are renewed in the spirit and temper of their minds, they can do nothing which the Church is at liberty to approve as done by them. When the body is dead it must be expected to putrefy, and it is very idle to be lopping off, one by one, the decaying members, as if you could arrest the progress of dissolution. As the whole state of the non-professing members is unsound, let the discipline of the Church be directed against that state, and not against individual transgressions. Let her consign them, by a single word, to the position which universally attaches to impenitence. This general persistent exclusion from the society of the living is a testimony against their nature as well as their acts, and pronounces them, in every view, to be unworthy of the kingdom of God. There is no tacit implication that in anything they are sound; the whole head is pronounced to be sick, and the whole heart faint, and the whole body full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. This judgment is according to truth.

Judicial prosecution is further evinced, in such cases, to be frivolous from the circumstance, that the severest penalties which the Protestant Church feels itself authorized to

pronounce do not modify the ecclesiastical attitude of the offender. They leave him precisely where he was. There are three forms of censure—admonition, suspension, and excommunication. The difference between suspension and excommunication is a difference in degree, and not in kind. Excommunication is more solemn in form, and more permanent and stringent in operation. But in the Protestant Church it never amounts to anathema; it never dissolves the *vinculum* by which the person is, through baptism, related to the Church and the covenant of grace. It never consigns him to hopeless and eternal perdition.[1] The only case in which the Church would be at liberty to denounce such a censure would be one in which the party had notoriously sinned the sin unto death. That is the only crime which cuts off from the hope of mercy and the possibility of repentance, and is consequently the only crime of which the Church, in the exercise of her declarative power, is competent to say that by it the man is excluded from all the benefits symbolized in baptism, and has become an alien and an outcast. But as God has furnished us with no means of knowing when this sin has been committed, He has virtually debarred us from this species of excommunication. The highest censure left to us is that of permanent exclusion from the sacraments. To inflict this censure upon a baptized non-professor, after the formalities of a trial in

[1] "Excommunication differs from anathema in this, that the latter, completely excluding pardon, dooms and devotes the individual to eternal destruction; whereas the former rebukes and animadverts upon his manners; and, although it also punishes, it is to bring him to salvation, by forewarning him of his future doom. If it succeeds, reconciliation and restoration to communion are ready to be given. Moreover, anathema is rarely, if ever, to be used. Thence, though ecclesiastical discipline does not allow us to be on familiar and intimate terms with excommunicated persons, still, we ought to strive, by all possible means, to bring them to a better mind, and recover them to the fellowship and unity of the Church; as the Apostle also says, 'Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.' (2 Thess. iii. 15.) If this humanity be not observed, in private as well as public, the danger is, that our discipline shall degenerate into destruction."—*Calvin Inst.*, book iv., c. xii., § 10.

which nothing is proved but what was known before—that is, that the man is a stranger to Christ—is obviously to leave him precisely where he was before—that is, excluded from all the blessings of the communion of saints.

> "The King of France, with forty thousand men,
> Went up a hill, and so came down again."

The baptized non-professor is actually in the very position, in relation to the sacraments and communion of the Church, in which excommunication puts the professing offender. The key is turned, and both are shut out from the inner sanctuary. Voetius, accordingly, puts the non-professing children of believers in the same category, in relation to their connection with the Church, as those who are under its censures. He distributes the people, in contradistinction from the clergy, into two parts—those who are strictly and properly members of the Church, "*partes proprias*," that is, communicants or believers, and those who are only analogically members, "*partes analogicas*," which division includes the children of the faithful, the fallen, the relapsed, the penitent, the suspended, and all who are under the censure of the Church, as well as three other classes, *audientes*, *catechumeni*, *competentes*, whose interest in religion may justify us in ranking them under the general head of inquirers. In his judgment, therefore, an excommunicated member is simply remitted to the place of a baptized non-professor.[1]

If it should be contended that there is an excommunication which dissolves the *vinculum ecclesiæ* without destroying the possibility of repentance, which simply consigns the party to the condition of the unbaptized world, which makes him a heathen and a publican, not morally and socially, but really and ecclesiastically—if we grant that such a censure is conceivable, then it would follow that the offender, upon the profession of his faith and penitence, would have to be re-baptized. If the Church consigned him to the condition of an unbaptized person, if she really made him a stranger and an alien, then, like every other foreigner, he can only

[1] Polit. Eccles., pars i., lib. i., c. i., § 2.

enter her through the door of baptism. Are our brethren prepared to become Anabaptists? Are they willing to contend for a species of censure which, to all intents and purposes, nullifies baptism without anathema? It is certain that no Protestant Church recognizes any such penalty. The validity of baptism extends through the whole life, and we are never competent to say that it may not signify and seal the engrafting of any individual into Christ as long as the offers of salvation are made to him, and therefore we never undertake to remit any human being to the ecclesiastical status he would have held if he had never been baptized. All that we do is to shut out incorrigible offenders from the society of the faithful. If they have been admitted to it, we show cause why they ought to be deprived of the privilege, and proceed to expel them; if they have never been admitted to it, we keep them where they are until they are prepared to come up higher. All this seems plain and natural, and we are wholly unable to account for the zeal which is not satisfied with it. To those who want to try our children in solemn judicial form, we propose the question, After you have convicted and sentenced them, what *change* have you made in their relation to the Church? Where have you put them? If *out of the Church*, how are they to get into it again without another baptism? If they are *still* in the Church, but *of* the world, how does their new situation differ from the old? We crave a solution of these questions from our stringent advocates of discipline. In either case they are excluded. How does the one exclusion differ from the other?

Then we should like to know what conceivable end it is imagined can be gained by judicial prosecution? The offences of such persons bring no scandal upon the name of Christ, because they do not profess to be governed by His Spirit, nor to be subject to His laws. They do not defile the communion of saints, because their impenitence has already excluded them from the society of the faithful. There is no danger, on the part of the Church, of incurring

the wrath of God for "suffering His covenant and the seals thereof to be profaned," because the doors have been effectually shut against all who are notoriously impenitent. What, then, is gained? Shall it be said that their guilty condition is more impressively urged upon them by selecting particular manifestations of their evil heart of unbelief, and subjecting them to special lectures on account of these? This is equivalent to saying that, in their case, censure is only a form of preaching. It is a part of the ministry of the Word. It pertains to the *potestas dogmatica*, and not to the *potestas judicialis*—it is an exercise of the key of knowledge, and not of the key of government. This is to come precisely to the position which the new Book maintains, that the Church owes it to these persons to train them, to teach them, to warn them, to persuade them by every motive of the Gospel to repent and believe. The only difference is, that the new Book does not confound teaching and government, nor when the design is only to preach does it dispense its sermons in the form of judicial decrees. It does not arraign a man and try him for drunkenness or falsehood, and then, upon conviction, proceed to inform him, as the sentence of the court, that he must repent or perish. Just this, it ventures to think, may be said to an impenitent sinner without waiting for special abominations. It is true that government and teaching are inseparably connected, and mutually support each other; the keys of doctrine and power can never be divorced. But still *censures* are specifically different from instruction, and even where they seem to run into one another, as in judicial admonitions, the distinction is not really abolished. Judicial admonition, as a *censure*, measures the ill-desert of the offender. It is the mildest penalty of the Church, and is to be dispensed only in those cases in which the degree of guilt does not, in the first instance, exclude from the sacraments. It disturbs without destroying the communion of the party with the saints. But admonition, as a *lesson*, is not the measure of ill-desert. It may pertain to the highest and gravest crimes, as well as to the

lowest peccadilloes. Judicial admonition a baptized non-professor is not in a condition to receive, because he can do nothing whose ill-desert is short of suspension.

We think we have now said enough to show that the principle of the new Book is right in itself, and not an unworthy concession to libertines or puritans. It proceeds on the assumption that the mode of dealing with the members of the Church, as with the members of the State or any other organized society, must be determined, not by the simple fact of membership, but by the state and quality of the persons. It finds that the status of baptized unbelievers can be exactly expressed by the formula, In the Church and of the world. They are *in the Church* as prospective heirs of grace, and hence are subject to it as a governor or tutor, that they may be trained, educated, fitted for the inheritance proposed to them. They are in the Church upon a definite principle—the general relation of election to the seed of the faithful; and for a definite end—that they may be qualified to continue the succession of the kingdom. As *of the world*, they are included in the universal sentence of exclusion, which bars the communion of saints against the impenitent and profane. They are sharers in its condemnation. They are put, as impenitent, upon the same footing with all others that are impenitent. As rejecters of Christ, they are kept aloof from the table of the Lord, and debarred from all the rights and privileges of the saints. Their impenitence determines the attitude of the Church towards them; for God has told her precisely what that attitude should be to all who obey not the Gospel. What more can be required? Are they not dealt with, in every respect, according to their quality? We have further seen that there is a manifest incongruity in subjecting this class of persons to judicial prosecution, as it has a tendency to cherish the delusion that, apart from particular offences, their condition is not reprehensible; and that in addition to this, the severest penalties which the Church is authorized to inflict would have no other effect but to leave them where they are. Put these considera-

tions together, and is not the new Book satisfactorily vindicated? It does not deny the membership of the persons in question; it expressly subjects them to law, to government, to training, to discipline in the wide sense of the term. It only says that they are unfit for that form of discipline which we call *judicial prosecution*. To be capable of it they must be professed believers. We close this part of the subject by a familiar illustration. Suppose a Commonwealth of free citizens, in which is found a number of slaves, existing in it for the express purpose of being trained for freedom, and on the express condition that, when pronounced duly qualified by competent authority, they should be admitted to all the immunities and privileges of freedom; how should that Commonwealth deal with those slaves? Is it not clear that the end for which they are there precisely determines one line of duty? Is it not equally clear that their condition, as slaves, determines their treatment in all other respects, until they are prepared to pass the test which changes their status? Is not this precisely the state of things with the Church and its baptized unbelievers? Are they not the slaves of sin and the Devil, existing in a free Commonwealth for the purpose of being educated to the liberty of the saints? Should they not, then, be carefully instructed on the one hand, and on the other be treated according to their true character as slaves, in every other respect, until they are prepared for their heritage of liberty? This is just what the new Book teaches. It requires the most scrupulous fidelity in training—every effort to bring these people to Christ. But, until they come to Him, it as distinctly teaches that they are to be dealt with as the Church deals with all the enemies of God. She makes no difference between Jews and Gentiles, when both put themselves in the same attitude of rebellion against Him. She turns the key upon them and leaves them without.

We might take up another line of argument and show, that, as the fundamental duty of the Church in relation to these people is to seek their conversion to God, censures are

particularly incongruous, as censures are not the seed of regeneration. It is the Word of promise, the Word of the Gospel, through which alone we are begotten to the hope of salvation. Faith is allured by grace, and not impelled by penalties. But in our former article we said enough upon this topic. We shall simply endorse here all that we said there, with the solemn protestation that we have seen or heard nothing that even modifies our opinion.

But the principle of the new Book is not only right in itself, it has received the consent of the whole Reformed Church, and been either directly or indirectly maintained by its ablest Theologians. This proposition may astound some of our readers. The doctrine of the new Book has been so industriously represented as a pernicious novelty, that many will, no doubt, be surprised when they come to find that the novelty is really in the principle of the Old Discipline. The new Book only takes us back to the good old paths. The history of the innovation we have not taken the trouble to investigate. It is probable that it arose from some such logic as that which is now pertinaciously employed to defend it. All baptized persons are members of the Church; all members of the Church are subject to discipline; all subjects of discipline are liable to judicial prosecution; therefore all baptized persons are liable to judicial prosecution;—it is likely that a halting sorites of this kind lay at the basis of the change.

In pleading the consent of the Reformed Church, we do not mean to assert that the proposition for which we contend is found *totidem verbis* in any of the symbols of its faith or discipline. In an earnest age, and among a people who had been trained to regard attention to the external rites of religion as the mark by which they were distinguished from Heathens, Turks and Jews, it is probable that very few reached the years of discretion without making a public profession of their faith by coming to the Lord's table. In all the controversies concerning church-government, and the right of excommunication, the main diffi-

culty was with Erastians and Libertines, who, intent upon retaining the prestige of Christian gentlemen without renouncing their sins, denied to the Ministers of Christ the power to protect the Lord's table from scandalous intrusion. Two points were strenuously maintained by the Reformers: 1. The right of the Church to detain from the communion those who had not the measure of knowledge necessary to discern the Lord's body; and, 2. The right of the Church to expel from the communion those who, having been admitted, had proved themselves unworthy by heresy or ill manners. The only form in which they employed discipline in reference to those who had never been admitted to the Lord's table was that of simple detention or exclusion, accompanied by the use of all proper means tending to conversion. Censures, specifically so called, they applied exclusively to professed believers. This point can be abundantly demonstrated from their Creeds, Confessions and Formularies of Discipline. It is impossible to read these documents without feeling that when the question was of censures, as dependent upon trial and conviction, the Church had in its eye none others but those who claimed to belong to the congregation of the faithful. When to this is added the explicit avowal of this doctrine on the part of able and influential divines, the conclusion is absolutely irresistible. The posture of the Reformed Churches upon this subject may be collected from their general conception of the Church; from their specific teachings in relation to the nature and ends of censures; and, from their positive regulations as to the mode in which they should be dispensed.

1. The idea of the Church, according to the Reformed conception, is the complete realization of the decree of election. It is the whole body of the elect considered as united to Christ their Head. As actually existing at any given time, it is that portion of the elect who have been effectually called to the exercise of faith and made partakers of the Holy Ghost. It is, in other words, the whole body of

existing believers. According to this conception, none are capable of being church-members but the elect, and none are ever, in fact, church-members but those who are truly renewed. The Church is, therefore, the communion of saints, the congregation of the faithful, the assembly of those who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. That this conception is fundamental in all the Reformed Confessions, and among all the Reformed Theologians worthy of the name, we will not insult the intelligence of our readers by stopping to prove. The Church was co-extensive with faith. As true faith in the heart will manifest itself by the confession of the mouth, it is certain that the children of God, wherever they have the opportunity, will be found professing their faith in Him; and, as there is no method of searching the heart and discriminating real from false professors but by the walk, all are to be accepted as true believers whose lives do not give the lie to their pretensions. The body of professors is, therefore, to be accepted as the Church of Christ, because the truly faithful are in it. The Gospel is never preached without converting some; these will profess their faith, and will vindicate to any society the name of *a Church*. As to those professors who are destitute of faith, they are not properly members of the Church; they are wolves among sheep, tares among the wheat, warts and excrescences upon the body. The visible Church is, accordingly, the society or congregation of those who profess the true religion; among whom the Gospel is faithfully preached and the sacraments duly administered. And it is simply because such a society cannot be destitute of genuine believers, that it is entitled to the name of *the Church*. Profession must be accepted in the judgment of men as equivalent to the possession of faith, and the body of professors must pass for saints until hypocrites and unbelievers expose themselves. Now, it is this professing body which the Reformed symbols have in view when they speak of the visible Church. The idea of profession is not only promi-

nent but fundamental. A society without this element, whatever else it might be, they would never have dreamed of calling a Church. That this is the true development of the Reformed doctrine of the visible Church may be seen by consulting the Institutes of Calvin. Into very few of the Confessions does any other element enter. The Westminster and, perhaps, another are the only ones in the collection of Niemeyer in which there is any allusion to children; not that their external relation to the Church was denied, but the mind was intent upon the communion of saints, which was not to be looked for by man out of the professing body; and hence, as the real Church was there, that was the sole body that was contemplated. The general aim of discipline was to keep this body pure, and that could be accomplished in only two ways—by refusing to admit those who were too ignorant or scandalous to make a consistent profession, and by the reformation or expulsion of those who brought reproach upon the Gospel. Setting out with the idea that the Church is to be found only among professors, that it is and can be detected by the eye of man no where else, it is intuitively obvious that they must have made these professors the sole object of reformatory and penal measures. They could not have been consistent with themselves upon any other hypothesis.

2. Accordingly we find, that, when they treat formally of censures, they define the ends and regulate the degrees in terms which cannot, without unwarrantable liberties, be applied to any but the professedly faithful. The Prior Confessio Basiliensis makes it the design of excommunication to separate the tares from the wheat, in order that the face of the Church might, as far as possible, be preserved free from blemish.[1] The tares are supposed to be mingled in with the wheat, not growing up in separate and distinct portions of the field—*Zizania sese Ecclesiæ Christi immiscent.* The case is evidently that of hypocrites and reprobates joined in the same confession of faith and meeting at

[1] Niemeyer, p. 97.

the same table of the Lord. There is no such mixture on the part of baptized non-professors. They are easily distinguished, and without difficulty detached from the communion of saints. The end of excommunication, in relation to the offender, is his amendment—*emendationis gratia;* which implies, that, prior to his offence, he was in reputable standing and brought no spot upon the Church. Can this be said of those who are avowedly unconverted? In the Heidelberg Catechism,[1] in answer to the question, How is the kingdom of heaven shut and opened by ecclesiastical discipline? we are told that the subjects of discipline are nominal Christians, whose life and doctrines are inconsistent with union to Christ. This language, taken by itself, may be applied to the baptized; they have the Christian name. But it is added, that these nominal Christians must be more than once *fraternally* admonished—*aliquoties fraterne admoniti*—and then, if they prove incorrigible, reported to the officers of the Church, in order that, if they still remain obstinate, they may be interdicted from the sacraments and from the congregation of the Church. Surely such language implies that they were not only brethren by the common seal of baptism, but brethren, also, by a common profession of faith. We do not say that a different interpretation is impossible, but we do say that it is unnatural and forced. In the acts and conclusions of the Polish Synod at Wlodislave,[2] it is provided, after an enumeration of scandals and enormities which reveal a shocking state of manners, that ecclesiastical discipline in due degrees—*debitis gradibus*—should be used against the perpetrators of such crimes, if any of them should be found in the churches of Poland. The pertinacious were to be cut off *from the use of the Lord's Supper,* and ejected from the congregation *of the faithful.* Obviously the subjects of this discipline were previously partakers of the Lord's Supper and reckoned among the faithful. The same decree occurs again in the Synod of Thorn,[3] in which the degrees of punishment

[1] Niemeyer, p. 449. [2] Niemeyer, p. 575. [3] Niemeyer, p. 583.

are varied in the expression, but the impression as to the status of the culprits is made still more distinct. They are first to be admonished, then excluded from the Supper, and then excommunicated. There is a decree of this Synod which, at first blush, seems to insinuate that non-professing members were subject to censures—the decree which makes abstinence from the communion and neglect of public ordinances a penal offence. But, as the Reformed Churches always insisted upon a previous examination as the ground of a right to approach the Lord's table, the neglect in question is the neglect, not of making a profession of religion, but of walking worthy of that profession after it had been made. It was the remissness of professed believers, or their apparent contempt of their privileges, which the fathers meant to rebuke. Here, too, it is worthy of remark, the sentence is immediately *excommunication*. There is no interdiction of the Supper. The inference is, that the intermediate step was omitted because the parties were in the voluntary neglect of that sacrament. If so, it would have been omitted in the other cases, if the parties had not been in the use of it. The argument from the degrees of censure is, to our minds, very conclusive. We find in all the Reformed symbols that they are reduced to three—admonition, suspension and excommunication—and that, as a general thing, they follow each other in regular order. There is no intimation that offenders are not equally subject to all; on the contrary, the language of these documents is nonsense, unless the man who was exposed to one was likewise exposed to the others. He who was admonished, if he proved incorrigible, might be suspended from the Supper; he who was suspended from the Supper, if he continued perverse, might be excommunicated. There were crimes so flagrant that the degrees might be disregarded and excommunication at once pronounced. But still the parties were capable of suspension. It is not only in the teachings of Theologians, but in the Formularies of Discipline, we find these ever-recurring degrees brought out in

a manner that renders it absolutely incredible, that the authors of these manuals considered them as applicable only in a divided sense. In the Discipline, for example, of the Reformed Churches of France, as given in Quick's Synodicon,[1] we have in Canons xv., xvi., xvii., the process of censure. There are the three degrees. The offender is first admonished, then suspended from the Supper, and then excommunicated; and in the formula of excommunication it is expressly asserted that the other degrees of censure had been used in vain. We defy any man to read these Canons and say that the person here excommunicated was not previously a partaker of the Lord's Supper, that is, a professor of religion. These same degrees occur in our own Directory of Worship, and, by the singular grace of God, while we have inserted folly in our Book of Discipline, we have been kept from exemplifying it by the prescriptions of that manual. No man can be excommunicated, according to the provisions of our Directory, who was not previously liable to suspension. Excommunication is always the penalty of obstinacy, or of crimes so flagrant and shocking that they supersede intermediate measures of reform. In every case the subject is a professed believer. He is one whom it has been found necessary *to cut off from the communion*, and the sentence, which, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the presiding judge is directed to pronounce, is a sentence which simply *excludes from the communion of the Church.*[2] Let the old Discipline, therefore, assert what it may, it is impossible to excommunicate, in the prescribed forms, any but communicating members of the Church. The Directory and the New Book are perfectly at one.

The doctrine of the Church of Scotland is even more unambiguously expressed than that of our own Church. "Church discipline," we are told, "serves chiefly to curb and restrain the more peccant humours of professors"[3]—a

[1] Vol. i., pp. 31, 32.

[2] Directory for Worship, chap. x., § 7.

[3] Pardovan, book iv., tit. 1.

very pregnant intimation that these are properly its subjects. In section seventh of the same title from which this clause has been taken, we have defined what constitutes a satisfaction for scandal. The article evidently takes for granted that he who is required to give the satisfaction is a communicant with the Church. A distinction is made between the satisfaction which "admits the offender unto all Church privileges," and that which stays proceedings for the time. In section twelfth it is required that the offender should confess his sin and "declare his sorrow for it, before absolution, *that the congregation may the more cordially readmit him into their communion.*" How can such language be applied to one who was never in the communion of the Church? But the title, *Of the order of proceeding to excommunication*, precludes all doubt as to the status of the offender to be punished. In the sentence itself—"he is shut out from the communion of the faithful, debarred from their privileges and delivered over unto Satan," and in the distinction betwixt the lesser and the greater excommunication, it is obvious that neither can be employed except against one who has been admitted to the Lord's table.[1] We quote the whole section below.

[1] "The 4th Art., Cap. 30, of our Confession of Faith saith, that for the better attaining the ends of Church censures, the officers of the Church are to proceed by admonition, suspension from the sacrament of the Lord's Supper for a time, and by excommunication from the Church. The difference, then, betwixt these two censures is: suspension from the Lord's Supper imports that the person so censured is in imminent danger of being excommunicated and cut off from the Church, but before that heavy and finishing stroke be inflicted, there are further means to be used, such as prayers and admonitions, in order to his reclaiming, 2 Thess. iii., 6, 14, 15: 'Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly. And if any man obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed, yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.' Whereas, when a person is cut off by that high censure, he is to be looked on as a heathen man (Matt. xviii. 17), upon which the Church ceaseth to be his reprover, they give him over for dead or desperate, and will administer no more of the medicine of Church discipline unto him, 1 Cor. v. 12: 'For what

If, now, the reader will put together the conception of the Reformed symbols in regard to the essential nature of the Church, their specific teachings concerning the ends and design of censures, and their public provisions for inflicting them upon offenders, we think that he cannot resist the conclusion, that the doctrine of the new Book has their sanction. Their language can be consistently interpreted upon no other hypothesis. Not a single note of discord comes from any quarter. From France, Scotland, Holland and England, wherever the Reformed doctrines were planted, and the Reformed discipline enforced, we have but one testimony. The Committee of Revision have done nothing more than restore the ancient landmarks. They have followed the footsteps of the flock.

3. Our general conclusion in relation to the Reformed Churches is reduced to certainty by the teaching of their most distinguished theologians. From the abundant materials which we have at hand upon this subject we shall select, in mercy to our readers, only a few passages, but they shall be from men who, on their own account, as well as on account of their influence in the Church, are entitled to be heard. The first witness we shall cite is Calvin. He is maintaining the nature of spiritual jurisdiction as one branch of the power of the keys, and after having defined its ends in the language of Paul, he proceeds to enforce its necessity. We beg our readers to ponder the following passage:[1] "As this is done by the preaching of doctrine, so in order that doctrine may not be held in derision, *those who profess to be of the household of faith* ought to be judged according to the doctrine which is taught. Now this cannot be done without connecting with the office of the ministry a right of summoning those who are to be privately admonished or sharply rebuked, a right, moreover, of keeping back from the communion of the Lord's Supper those

hath the Church to do to judge them that are without? but them that are without God judgeth.'"—*Pardovan*, book iv., tit. vi.

[1] Inst. lib. iv., c. xi., § 5.

who cannot be admitted without profaning the ordinance. Hence, when Paul elsewhere asks, What have I to do to judge them also that are without? (1 Cor. v. 12), he makes the members of Churches subject to censures for the correction of their vices, and intimates the existence of tribunals from which no *believer* is exempted." Connect this with his previous definitions of the visible Church[1] "as the whole body of mankind scattered throughout the world, who *profess* to worship one God and Christ, who by baptism are initiated into the faith, and by partaking of the Lord's Supper *profess* unity in true doctrine and charity," etc., and there is no evading the answer which he gives as to the proper subject of church-censures. It is true that, in saying that all believers are subject to discipline, the proposition as to its form does not imply that others are not also subject. But it is equally true that, in all definitions, the predicates of universal affirmatives are distributed, and therefore, in the present case, the doctrine is that believers are the only proper subjects of judicial prosecution. To this must be added, that the whole spirit of the chapter and of the entire discussion concerning the Church exacts this view.

We shall next cite a witness from the Dutch, the celebrated Voet, who died in 1677. In his great work of Ecclesiastical Polity, he devotes a chapter[2] to the consideration of the question concerning the proper object (subject) of discipline. The object of discipline he distinguishes into material and formal. The material object is *man*, and *man under the notion of a believer, or of one professing faith*, in actual communion and confederation with the Church. He is further considered as fallen into sin, and sin which, from its having become public, is to be regarded as a scandal. As the formal object of discipline, he must further be considered as pertinaciously persisting in his sin, against remonstrances and admonitions. Such is the substance of a passage so directly to our hands that there is no possibility of

[1] Inst., lib. iv., c. i., § 7.
[2] Pars iii., lib. iv., tr. 2, c. 4.

evading its sense. We give the original below.[1] The meaning clearly is that none are subjects of discipline but professed believers. But as if to cut off all possibility of doubt, he proposes the question, whether those who have been baptized in infancy, and have not made a profession of faith, are amenable to censure. His answer is exactly in the sense of the new Book. Though, says he, the ante-

[1] Hactenus de quæstione an sit, seu de necessitate disciplinæ ecclesiasticæ. Accedimus nunc ad uberiorem ejus explicationem. Hic primò occurrit Objectum, circa quod occupatur disciplina. Quod distingui potest in materiale et præsuppositum; idque aut remotum, aut propinquum seu mediatum; Et in formale, immediatum, proximum. *Illud* est homo, et quidem fidelis seu fidem profitens, in communione et confœderatione ecclesiastica actu constitutus. *Istud* est, lapsus in peccatum aut crimen et quidem publicum in prima perpetratione, aut postea publicum factum, ita ut peccatum hic consideretur sub ratione scandali. *Hoc* est, fidelis lapsus, et in eo pertinaciter perseverans post et contra fraternas ac paternas inspectorum ecclesiæ admonitiones ac correptiones. De duobus posterioribus commodè agemus, ubi de causis disciplinæ. Sint ergo de objecto primæ considerationis ista problemata. I. *Prob.* An in ullas alias creaturas, præter homines viatores, anathema aut censura ecclesiastica sit dirigenda. *Resp.* Neg. contra catachresticum interdictum Pontificiorum, quod definitur, censura ecclesiastica sacramentorum usum, divina officia et sepulturam ecclesiasticam secundum seipsam prohibens. Et dividitur in locale, personale et mixtum: ita ut locale sit quo directè interdicitur locus, ne in eo divina officia audiantur ab incolis aut extraneis; quamvis personæ loci interdicti possint alibi audire divina officia. Vide Zwarez in 3 Thomæ, ubi de censuris disp. 32, sect. 1 et 2. Et inter Casuistas, Navarrum, Toletum, Bonacinam. Sed refutantur ex iis locis ubi objectum disciplinæ dicitur frater, Math. 18, v. 15. 1 Corinth. 5, v. 11, 12, 13, et quidem peccator contra correptiones aut monitiones pertinax, Math. 18, Tit. 3, v. 10.

II. *Prob.* An objectum disciplinæ sint amentes, pueri, surdi, muti? *Resp.* 1. De duobus prioribus absolutè negatur; quia non recipiuntur inter fratres aut fideles propriè dictos seu in membra ecclesiæ completa. Quod si quis antea fidelis fuerit, et in amentiam inciderit, disciplina coerceri non debet, quidquid tunc absurdi commiserit. Pontificii more suo τερατολογοῦσι de amentibus et pueris, quod non censeantur interdicti, interdicta communitate; quia non sint capaces doli et culpæ; priventur tamen ecclesiastica sepultura tempore interdicti; hoc sit interdictum locale quod directè afficit locum. Sic Zwarez loco cit. Et ex Casuistis Fillijucius, Sayrus, Basseus. 2. De posterioribus aff. Siquidem in membra ecclesiæ recepti fuerint: uti hoc aliquando fieri posse alibi docemus.

III. *Prob.* An extranei à fide et ecclesia? *Resp.* Neg. ex 1 Corinth. v. 10, 11, 12.

cedents and precursors of discipline—counsels and rebukes—may be applied to them, "*I do not see how it can be proved that discipline, properly so called* (that is, censures upon judicial prosecution), *can be extended to them.*" Why? "*Because they have never been received upon a profession of their faith into the confederation of the Church, and admitted to the Lord's Supper.*"[1]

To precisely the same purport is the testimony of another Dutchman, Van Mastricht.[2] "The material object of ecclesiastical discipline," he tells us, "is an offending brother—that is, one who *professes to be a member of a Church.* The formal object is a sinner, offending either in doctrine, by fundamental heresy, or in manners." He then goes on to specify different classes of offenders, having in his eye, throughout, none but the professed members of the household of faith.

The next witness whom we shall put upon the stand is no less a person than the venerable Puritan, old John Owen. In his treatise upon the Original, Nature, etc., of Evangelical Churches, we find the following passage:[3] "There is a double joining unto the Church: 1. That which is, as unto total communion, in all the duties and privileges of the Church, which is that whereof we treat; 2. An adherence unto the Church, as unto the means of instruction and edi-

[1] IV. *Prob.* An qui in infantia in ecclesiis nostris baptizati sunt? *Resp.* Hoc video velle scriptorem anonymum, cujus theses de disciplina ecclesiastica olim in vernaculum idioma translatæ sub nomine Jacobi Arminii editæ sunt: in quo tamen conjectura aut suspicio translatorem fefellit. Quod ad hanc opinionem fateor antecedentia et præambula disciplinæ, uti sunt admonitiones et correptiones ecclesiasticæ, peculiari cura talibus applicanda: non video tamen quomodo probari possit disciplinam propriè dictam ad eos extendendam: cum nunquam per actualis fidei professionem in ecclesiasticam confœderationem recepti ad cœnæ communionem admissi sint. Quomodo ergo ab ea excludentur? Accedit, quod hác ratione ad myriadas hominum, qui ex parentibus Christianis orti sunt et in infantia baptizati, sed ante usum rationis abducti et in Muhammedismo aut Gentilismo educati sunt, censura extendi deberet: quod tamen absurdum videtur.

[2] Theolog., lib. vii., c. vi., § 8.

[3] Works, vol. xx., ch. viii., p. 187.

fication to be attained thereby. So persons may adhere unto any Church, who yet are not meet, or free on some present consideration, to confederate with it, as unto total communion. And of this sort, in a peculiar manner, are the baptized children of the members of the Church. For although they are not capable of performing church-duties or enjoying church-privileges in their tender years, nor can have a right unto total communion, before the testification of their own voluntary consent thereunto and choice thereof; yet are they, in a peculiar manner, under the care and inspection of the Church, so far as the outward administration of the covenant, in all the means of it, is committed thereunto; and their duty it is, according to their capacity, to attend unto the ministry of that Church whereunto they do belong." This is one half of the doctrine of the new Book. Let us see how much farther he goes. In chapter eleventh,[1] he answers the question as to the object of church-discipline. That object, he tells us, "as it is susceptive of members, is *professed believers*, and as it is corrective, it is those who stubbornly deviate from the rule of Christ, or live in disobedience of his commands"—that is, those professed believers, for these only he considers properly members of the Church.[2] One more extract, our readers will pardon us for making, from this venerable saint. It is from the first chapter of the Treatise on the True Nature of a Gospel Church,[3] and it is so full and explicit as to the duties of the Church to the children received into its bosom, that, independently of its pertinency to the question before us, it is worthy of being soberly and solemnly weighed. "Two things may be yet inquired into that relate unto this part of the state of Evangelical Churches; as, 1. Whether a Church may not, ought not, to take under its conduct, inspection and rule, such as are not yet meet to be received into full communion; such as are the children and servants

[1] Works, vol. xx., p. 233.
[2] Cf. Treat. on True Nat. Gosp. Ch., Works, vol. xx., ch. x., p. 548.
[3] Works, vol. xx., p. 367.

of those who are complete members of the Church? Answer: No doubt the Church, in its officers, may and ought so to do, and it is a great evil when it is neglected. For, (1.) they are to take care of parents and masters as such, and as unto the discharge of their duty in their families; which, without an inspection into the condition of their children and servants, they cannot do. (2.) Households were constantly reckoned unto the Church, when the heads of the families were entered into covenant, Luke xix. 9; Acts xvi. 15; Rom. xvi. 10, 11; 1 Cor. i. 16; 2 Tim. iv. 19. (3.) Children do belong unto, and have an interest in, the parents' covenant; not only in the promise of it, which gives them right unto baptism, but in the profession of it in the church-covenant, which gives them a right to all the privileges of the Church whereof they are capable, until they voluntarily relinquish their claim unto them. (4.) Baptizing the children of church-members, giving them thereby an admission into the visible catholic Church, puts an obligation on the officers of the Church to take care, what in them lieth, that they may be kept and preserved meet members of it by a due watch over them and instruction of them. (5.) Though neither the Church nor its privileges be continued and preserved, as of old, by carnal generation; yet, because of the nature of the dispensation of God's covenant, wherein He hath promised to be a God unto believers and their seed, the advantage of the means of a gracious education in such families, and of conversion and edification in the ministry of the Church, ordinarily the continuation of the Church is to depend on the addition of members out of the families already incorporated into it. The Church is not to be like the kingdom of the Mamalukes, wherein there was no regard unto natural successors, but it was continually made up of strangers and foreigners incorporated into it; nor like the beginning of the Roman commonweal, which, consisting of men only, was like to have been the matter of one age alone."

"The duty of the Church towards this sort of persons con-

sists: (1.) In prayer for them; (2.) Catechetical instruction of them according unto their capacities; (3.) Advice to their parents concerning them; (4.) Visiting of them in the families whereunto they do belong; (5.) Encouragement of them, or admonition, according as there is occasion; (6.) Direction for a due preparation unto the joining themselves unto the Church in full communion; (7.) Exclusion of them from a claim unto the participation of the especial privileges of the Church, where they render themselves visibly unmeet for them and unworthy of them."

We think that we have now accomplished the work which we proposed—that we have sufficiently demonstrated that the principle of the new Book is right and proper in itself, that it is no pernicious novelty, but in perfect harmony with the general voice of the Reformed Churches, and with the testimony and teaching of the ablest Theologians. The principle, indeed, is in such striking accordance with the spiritual instincts of the Church, that even among ourselves it has been universally adopted in practice, in the very face of the letter of the law. The truth is, the doctrine of the old Book cannot be carried out without the most disastrous results. It would have the double effect of bringing infant baptism into contempt and of peopling the Church with hypocrites and formalists. Why not, then, make our theory and practice coincide? What the Church needs is not a more stringent discipline, in the narrow sense of the term, but a more faithful discharge of the duties of inspection, prayer and training. If her obligation to educate the young for God, to commend them constantly to His grace, to be concerned for their spiritual welfare—if her obligation to labour and intercede for their early conversion and their consistent walk, were more deeply felt and more earnestly discharged, we should soon experience the benefits of infant baptism upon a scale that would illustrate the preciousness of the covenant and the riches of the glory of God's grace. In the mean time we may be permitted to repeat what we have formally ventured to pronounce, that the new Book

has done a real service in making plain and intelligible to the Church the true status of her baptized non-professing children, and in developing the principle upon which alone they can be consistently dealt with. The theory announced has, at least, the merit of being perfectly coherent, and as it comes to us with the prestige of illustrious authorities, it should not be dismissed at the bidding of idle prejudices or sophistical illusions. The Church may refuse to adopt the amendment; but, though no prophets, we have little scruple in venturing to predict, that, unless she loses her spirituality and becomes willing to accept a formal regularity of life for the graces of genuine faith and penitence, she never will be brought to execute the letter of the old law. It will stand on our book, a monument of folly as retained, a monument of life as disregarded. We should, perhaps, crave the indulgence of our readers for having dwelt so long upon this point, but the importance of the subject is our apology. The other topics of the discipline can be more rapidly dispatched.

II. The next to which we shall advert is the standard of offences. The old Book refers us directly to the Bible, and leaves it an open question, in every instance of prosecution, whether the things charged are prohibited or not. The new Book refers us to the Constitution of the Church as an accepted compendium of what the Bible is acknowledged to teach. According to the old Book we are required to proceed as if nothing were agreed upon; according to the new, we abide by our covenants. It is admitted that our Standards are a competent measure of heresy, but denied that they are a competent measure of morality. The reason is, that the fundamental doctrines of religion are few, definite and precise, and therefore easily digested into a human compendium, but "the points of Christian practice endlessly varied," and therefore incapable of inclusion in any human manual. If by "points of Christian practice" is meant the fundamental principles of morality, the statement is absurd. They are even fewer than the essential doctrines

of Christianity. The Platonists and Stoics reduced them to four; Christian moralists the most eminent, such as Berkeley and Butler, have reduced them to three—truth, justice and benevolence; others have still further reduced them to two; and an inspired Apostle has comprehended all human duty in the single principle of love. If by "points of Christian practice" is meant the concrete cases in which the principles of duty are to be exemplified, these are confessedly endless, and the Bible no more attempts to enumerate them than the Standards of the Church. But the cases are as endlessly varied in which Christian doctrine is to be applied to the hearts and consciences of men; and for one question of casuistry touching a matter of practical duty, every pastor has, at least, a dozen touching the relations of the soul to God as determined by Christian doctrines. If, then, the principles of morality cannot be mastered without a knowledge of all their diversified concrete applications, how can the doctrine be mastered without a corresponding skill?

And why it should be easier for uninspired genius to contract the doctrine within comprehensive heads, than to contract the morals, it is particularly hard to understand, since in the matter of the doctrine we are wholly dependent upon Divine revelation, while in the matter of morals we have a source of knowledge within ourselves. Redemption is, throughout, a supernatural mystery, and all that we know of it, in the language of Taylor, "descends to us immediately from Heaven, and communicates with no principle, no matter, no conclusion here below." The sublime truths which make up Christian Theology are precisely the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. They transcend alike the sphere of sense and the scope of reason, and in order to be known they must be revealed by God's Holy Spirit. Moral distinctions, on the other hand, are the necessary offspring of the human soul—there is nothing supernatural about them. Even the heathen are not insensible

to their reality and power; and what the Bible has done in reference to them has been to republish with authority and free from prejudice and mixture, and to enforce with new and peculiar sanctions, and to extend to new relations, those eternal principles of rectitude which were originally engraved upon the nature of man. It would seem, therefore, much more likely that the human understanding, without supernatural aid, could construct an adequate compendium of morals than an adequate compendium of doctrine. Surely it is easier to move in the sphere of the natural, without inspiration, than in the sphere of the supernatural. Accordingly there has been comparatively little controversy as to the right, the just, the pure, the honourable, while there have been interminable disputes as to redemption and grace. We regret that any Christian writer should represent the moral virtues as essentially obscure. Their clearness and authority, in a Christian country, are one means by which the conviction of sin is generated, which prepares the heart for the precious mysteries of the Cross. We do not see, therefore, but that the Standards of the Church are as complete as to morals, as they are in relation to doctrine. The law of God, as He Himself wrote it upon the tables of stone and proclaimed it from Sinai, is given in the *ipsissima verba* of the Most High, and the people likely to study our Standards are no more blind than the Jews. At any rate, our conviction is very strong that if any man will honestly practise all the duties prescribed in our Catechisms, in the spirit in which they are expounded and enforced, he will not only pass through the world without any just imputation of offence, but will be welcomed at last into the kingdom of glory as a saint redeemed, purified, perfected. When any of our people find that law too narrow for them, it will be time to look about for a broader commandment.

But it seems that our Standards are only *inferences* from the Word of God. This, we confess, is news to us. When we assented to them upon our admission to the ministry, we verily thought within ourselves that we were assenting to

the very doctrines and precepts of the Word, and not to the ratiocinations of men. We should like to know what are the original doctrines and precepts, if these are only inferences at second hand. If these are not the identical things which the Scriptures teach, but only conclusions which our fathers deduced from them, we would like to have the premises in their native integrity. But if our Standards teach precisely what the Scriptures teach, then the explicit evolution of what is contained in them is the explicit evolution of what is contained in the Scriptures, and the man who is condemned by inference from them is condemned by the Word of God. The whole question as to the propriety of making our Constitution the standard of offences is contained in a nut-shell. The Constitution is, with Presbyterians, the accredited interpretation of the Word of God. It is not an inference from it, nor an addition to it, but the very system of the Bible. All cases, it is confessed, must be judged according to the Word of God. But that Word has to be interpreted. If the Constitution is what we profess to believe, we have the interpretation to our hand—we have already wrought out for us the only result we could reach, if we made the interpretation anew in every instance of prosecution. Then the new Book says, Take the interpretation you have agreed on; it is what you will have to come to if you do not take it, and therefore you had as well abridge your labour and abide by your covenant.

But we are further told that our Standards were never meant to be a rule of faith and practice—they are simply designed as the measure of official qualifications and the basis of official communion. Why on earth, then, were they ever put in the form of Catechisms? That looks marvellously as if they were intended to *teach the people;* and we had always supposed, until this new light broke in upon us, that the very reason why the Church exacts an assent from Ministers and Elders to these formularies of faith, was that she might have a reasonable guarantee, that in their

public instructions they would teach nothing inconsistent with the Word of God. We have always heretofore regarded subscription as a security for the sound dispensation of the Word of God. It is for the sake of the people, whom the Church wishes trained to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not simply for the sake of the officers, that she inquires so particularly into their life and doctrine. The things which they profess to believe she requires them to impress upon the faithful. Hence, our Standards are obviously a guide, a rule, a measure of their teaching. They contain exactly what the Church wants all her children trained to understand and to practise. Hence, she reduces them to a form in which they can be most conveniently used in the offices of instruction. We do not require young Christians, upon their admission to the Church, to adopt them, for we regard them as pupils to be taught, and pupils are not ordinarily supposed to be familiar with the science which they are appointed to learn. But we do require, and peremptorily require, that all the teachers shall teach only according to this summary, and we do expect that the knowledge in which their hearers are to grow will be precisely the knowledge embraced in these symbols. That the Catechisms profess to give the substance of the Word of God, as to faith and duty, is obvious on their very face. They reduce the principal instructions of Scripture to these two heads, and then articulately declare what is taught in reference to each; not some of the things, but the very things themselves, and that in their integrity. They omit only those parts of the Bible which do not fall under either of these categories, but there is no hint that they have only selected the principal points pertaining to the topics they have undertaken to expound. They have given the whole essence of Bible doctrine and Bible morality.

III. The next subject to which we shall advert is the chapter in the new Book entitled "Of cases without process." It provides, in the first place, for that class of cases

in which the necessity of a trial is superseded by the circumstances under which the offence was committed, or, by the confession of the offender. The question of guilt is a settled one, and the only point which is left to the court is the kind and the degree of censure. The objection lies, as we understand the matter, not against the dispensing with process, but against the *extempore* nature of the judgment. It is apprehended that, under the *first* specification, justice may be sacrificed to passion, and a sudden resentment take the place of cool deliberation. We have already said that there are instances in which the language of spontaneous indignation is the only language in which the rebuke can be adequately couched. The punishment should follow on the heels of the offence. The moral condemnation involved in an involuntary burst of honest indignation would be more powerful than a thousand lectures. Every society has the power of promptly visiting certain kinds of offences. There are outrages upon order and decency which bring down an instantaneous sentence of expulsion. It is a mistake to confound generous indignation with blind passion; such indignation is the natural sense of justice, and is one of the holiest emotions of our nature. The character of our courts and the rights of defence and appeal are a security against abuse. Under the old Book, punishment may follow as promptly upon conviction as under the new. There is no provision for an interval of time between the finding of a party guilty and the pronouncing of the sentence, and it is much more likely, that, in the process of a long trial, passions should be excited unfavourable to the calm administration of justice, than when the mind, without vexatious and disturbing associations, is brought face to face with guilt. The *second* specification, under which the cases are likely to be most numerous, is too self-evident to need vindication. Trial is a mockery where guilt is admitted.

The remaining provision of the chapter is in relation to the mode of dealing with the self-deceived. The principle which regulates the form is, that faith is an indispensable

qualification for admission to the Lord's Supper. The Session must judge as to the competency of those to be admitted. Those who make no profession at all are debarred from the table; those whose profession is subsequently discovered to be founded in mistake are remanded to the condition of baptized non-professors. The key is turned upon them, and they are excluded from the communion of the saints. Here is discipline—a lawful exercise of the power to open and shut, which Christ has committed to His servants. The exclusion is on the ground of confessed disqualification—a ground which necessitates the sentence. A trial in such a case is absurd, and no other sentence is possible. The statement of the case is its own vindication. But that there may be no mistake as to our own personal opinion, we feel bound to say, while we admit that the new Book treats the case as one of discipline, and makes the exclusion a judicial sentence, we, ourselves, are convinced that every man has a right to withdraw from the Church whenever he pleases, in the sense explained in our former article—a right in the sense that no human authority has the right to detain him.[1] As before God, he has no more right to apostatize than to commit any other sin. He is bound to believe and keep the commandments. But men have no commission to force him to do either. If he wants to go, they must let him go. "They went out from us," says the Apostle—not that they were expelled, but they went out of their own accord, freely, voluntarily—"because they were not of us." They found themselves in the wrong place, and they left it. The Church of France, in one of its Canons, makes provisions for simply announcing the names of apostates. They had gone, and the Church felt that all jurisdiction over them had gone with them. This is our own deliberate opinion. Men may become voluntarily exiles from their Saviour and their Church as well as from their country; but we have not engrafted this principle in the new Book of Discipline. Of course, where apostates, during the time of their pro-

[1] Page 324 of this volume.

fessed subjection to the Church, have committed scandalous offences, they are responsible for the scandal. The injury they have done to its name and character they are as much bound to answer for as any other offenders, and they are not to be at liberty to plead the right of withdrawal as a cover for their crimes.

IV. We shall say a few words about the right of inquest. The new Book asserts that every church-court has the inherent power to demand and receive satisfactory explanations from any of its members concerning any matters of evil report. This is represented as arbitrary, tyrannical and oppressive. In the first place, it is said to be in contradiction to the sacred principle of the common law, that every man is to be presumed innocent until he is proved to be guilty. For the life of us we are unable to see in what the contradiction consists! The meaning of the maxim is nothing more nor less than that no man is to be punished until he is convicted, and that no man is to be convicted without evidence. But surely it does not mean that no man is to be *suspected* until he is convicted, and that a man being suspected, the community must feel toward him precisely as it feels to the notoriously innocent. Such a maxim would not only subvert common sense, but annihilate, in every case, the possibility of a trial. It is clear as noonday, that suspicion must precede investigation, and that suspicion does affect the moral status of its object. The man against whom scandalous reports are in circulation is not upon the same footing, in public estimation, as those whose names are free from reproach. He is injured to the extent of the rumour, and the Church is injured in him. Now these rumours are either true or false. If true, he is entitled to no protection for his character; if false, his brethren should be in a condition to defend him and to vindicate the Church. If true, no injury is done to him by reducing him to the necessity of confession; if false, his good name may be rescued from infamy. In no case can injustice be done him. If he is guilty he deserves to suffer, and if not guilty he is saved

from suffering. We cannot appreciate the objection. The whole case, to us, is an instance of fraternal guardianship and care.

But, secondly, whether the principle is tyrannical or not, it has a noble history in our own Church, and has been enacted into law in relation to suspicions of heresy. During the New School controversy, it was strenuously and systematically maintained by the Old School party, that every Presbytery has the inherent right to certify itself concerning the orthodoxy of every Minister that seeks to join it, no matter how clear the testimonials which he is prepared to present. Here was the right of inquest as to doctrine. The Assembly solemnly recognized the right, and subsequently made the inquest an imperative obligation. If, in suspicious times, a man coming with clean papers could be righteously subjected to scrutiny in relation to his creed, surely, when he himself is suspected, there can be no tyranny in precisely the same process, when the question is one of character. The Old School Convention, which met at Pittsburgh, in 1835, in their Memorial to the General Assembly, signalize it as their first grievance, that the Assembly of the preceding year had denied to the Presbyteries the right of examining all who applied to be admitted into them, whatever might be their testimonials, and proceed to invoke, in the name of faithful Presbyterians, "a return to the genius of the Constitution; a restoration of the right and power of self-preservation; a repeal of the obnoxious act, and a distinct recognition of the inalienable right, in every Presbytery, of examining every applicant for admission into their number, be his credentials what they may, and of rejecting him, provided they think his admission would endanger their own purity and peace." In the resolutions adopted by the Assembly upon this Memorial, it was solemnly declared, "that, in the judgment of the General Assembly, it is the right of every Presbytery to be entirely satisfied of the soundness in the faith, and *the good character in every respect*, of those Ministers who apply to be admitted into the Presbytery as

members, and who bring testimonials of good standing from sister Presbyteries, or from foreign bodies with whom the Presbyterian Church is in correspondence. And if there be any reasonable doubt respecting the proper qualifications of such candidates, notwithstanding their testimonials, it is the right and may be the duty of such a Presbytery to examine them, or to take such other methods of being satisfied in regard to their suitable character as may be judged proper, and, if such satisfaction be not obtained, to decline receiving them." Here the whole principle is distinctly asserted, and that by the orthodox Assembly of 1835. The new Book only completes the application of the principle, extending it to morals as well as heresy. It is idle to say that the right to examine before admission, and to demand explanations after admission, is essentially different. They are only different forms of the same fundamental right—the right to be satisfied concerning character and soundness. It is worthy of mention, too, that not a single objection has been raised against the provision of the new Book which was not urged, with equal vehemence, by the New School against the right to examine. It was extra-judicial; it was arbitrary and oppressive; it violated the maxims of the common law; it was open and flagrant tyranny. The Church was unmoved by these fierce remonstrances then; we hope she will not be seduced by the sophistry and cavils of better men now. The cause is no better, though its advocates are changed.

V. The only remaining topic which claims our attention relates to the changes in the administration of appellate jurisdiction. In order to the ends of justice, the case should be transferred to the higher tribunal, not only as it was made out by the original parties, but as it was viewed by the court below. The grounds of the original decision must be known and must enter as an essential feature in the new presentation of the case. Now there are three ways by which this can be done. The lower courts can be made parties, as in the present system; or the members of

it can be made judges and retain their places as integral elements of the court above, as in the new Book; or they can be made consulting judges, without the privilege of voting. The objections to the first arrangement are, that it complicates the proceedings by a new issue, that it makes the members of the lower court attorneys and advocates, and weakens the sense of judicial responsibility under which they deliver their opinions. Their purpose will be more to defend themselves than to consult the merits of the case. The plan has been tried, and universal experience has condemned it. It has wrought nothing but confusion, embarrassment and mischief, and the Church has loudly demanded a reform. Ingenious pleas may be alleged to show that experience is wrong, but experience will be trusted in spite of all sophistry. The man who walks answers every argument against the possibility of motion. The choice, then, lies between the other two schemes. Both bring the whole case before the court. The advantage of the first is, that it preserves the integrity of the court, deepens the sense of personal responsibility in the delivery of opinions, and represses the temptation in the courts below to become partisans and advocates. The only danger which can be apprehended is, that their minds will be biased by self-partiality to cling to their old judgments, and fortified by the ambition of consistency against all new light. The only advantage of the last method is, that it avoids this danger. If the danger is real, the Church has to balance probabilities and choose the least evil. The whole question is one of great difficulty, and no expedient can be adopted which is free from objection. We think, that, all things considered, the provision of the new Book is most in harmony with the nature of our system, and though we cannot promise that it will never be abused, we are persuaded, for the reasons developed in our former article, that in the long run it will most effectually secure the ends of justice.

We are now ready to leave the new Book in the hands of the Assembly. We cannot predict its fate; it may be

rejected, it may be adopted, or it may be materially modified. Of one thing we are confident—the parts of it which have provoked most opposition are the parts which are least liable to exception. The only point in it which we think wholly indefensible is the anomalous extension of the right of appeal to parties that are not properly aggrieved. The only point which we think at all doubtful is the constitution of the Courts of Appeal. In all other respects its changes seem to us to be clear and unquestionable. They are founded upon principles which cannot be shaken; and though, through the influence of a sentiment which styles itself conservative, prejudice may rule the hour and righteous reforms be stigmatized as rash and lawless innovations, the time will come when truth will assert its supremacy and crotchets give place to reason.

THE CHURCH AND SLAVERY.

PREFATORY NOTE.

1. The first of the pieces here brought together under the general title of "The Church and Slavery" is a Report, which Dr. Thornwell prepared by appointment of the Synod of South Carolina, and which was unanimously adopted by that body at its sessions in Winnsborough, in 1851.

2. The second is a Sermon, from Col. iv. 1: "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven," preached May 26, 1850, before a large assembly of intelligent and respectable citizens of Charleston, at the dedication of a neat and commodious edifice, erected in Anson street in that city, for the worship and religious instruction of the Coloured People under the ministry of a member of the Charleston Presbytery. The work prospering greatly, larger accommodations became necessary, and another building was erected in Calhoun street, where the Gospel is still dispensed in faithfulness to the children of Africa. This is much the largest church-edifice in that city, and ordinarily it is well filled. This building, like the first, was erected by the white man of Charleston for the black man's benefit, and in it two white men, members of the Charleston Presbytery, continue alternately and constantly to preach to the former slaves, now set free, the blessed Gospel of a common Saviour. They have the aid of a body of coloured Ruling Elders in the oversight of nearly five hundred church members. The expense of this missionary pastoral work is chiefly borne by a congregation of whites whose pecuniary resources have been greatly reduced by the war, but who still love the souls of the coloured people.

These discussions have respect, chiefly, to a relation which is now among the things that were. Their insertion, however, is not useless. They enforce, with an ability which will be confessed, general principles of the utmost importance; and they have a special value for another reason. If, on the one hand, the holding of slaves was essentially sinful, and the Southern Church maintained a criminal silence in regard to the sin, no allusion could be made to her past position in the matter but one

which would involve an acknowledgment of guilt. If, on the other hand, slaveholding was not intrinsically sinful, and the relation of Slavery, as civil, was beyond the interference of the Church, the vindication of her attitude is required by historical justice. Such a vindication will be found in these masterly discussions by a man who may be fairly considered as having been a representative of Southern thought and sentiment on this subject. They will also serve to evince the fact, that, while the Abolitionists were expending their zeal in unmeasured denunciation of their brethren at the South, and in political attempts to effect the liberation of the slaves, Southern Christians were actively engaged, against such opposition as an ungodly world always offers to the Gospel, in efforts to afford them judicious religious instruction, and opportunities for securing the salvation of their souls through the gracious provisions of the Gospel. Dr. Thornwell was always the earnest advocate of the evangelization of a people whom Providence had made dependent on the Southern Church for a knowledge of Christianity. With all the energy of his enthusiastic nature, and all the power of his mighty, impassioned eloquence, he ever, in private and in public, on the platform, in the pulpit, and on the floors of ecclesiastical assemblies, pleaded for the Gospel to be given to the slave. Nor was this zeal his alone. His brethren in the ministry throughout the South reckoned the Negroes as their parishioners, and preached to them in a style adapted to their capacities. If the mass of the coloured race has, in any measure, been prepared for the responsibilities and duties of freemen so suddenly thrust upon them, the fact is due mainly to the preaching of Gospel Ministers, the instructions of the Sabbath-school, and the training of Christian families. The Southern Church makes no boast that she did her whole duty to the souls of the slaves. As before God, she has much to confess; but as before men, she can honestly affirm that she did not neglect the spiritual interests of the Negro, but sincerely endeavoured to lead him to Christ. A day of reaction may yet come, when the force of the views here submitted to the world will be acknowledged, when the justice which has hitherto been denied to the Church at the South will be rendered by the people of Jesus, who cannot always be blinded to scriptural truth by theories of human rights and humanitarian schemes, conceived in the womb of a rationalistic philosophy.

RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO SLAVERY.

IT will be remembered that at the sessions of this Synod in Columbia, in 1847, a series of resolutions was presented, setting forth the relations of the Church to Slavery, and the duties respectively of masters and servants. After some discussion, it was deemed advisable to appoint a Committee to take the whole subject into consideration, and submit a report, somewhat in the form of a Circular Letter to all the Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the earth, explaining the position of Southern Christians, and vindicating their right to the confidence, love and fellowship of all who everywhere call upon the name of our common Master. The design of appointing this Committee was not to increase but to allay agitation. It was evident that a strong public sentiment, both in Europe and America, had been organized, and was daily growing in intensity, against institutions which we had inherited from our fathers, and against which we felt no call, either from religion or policy, to enter a protest. We felt it to be due to Christian charity to make an effort, however unsuccessfully, to disabuse of prejudices and misapprehensions, which we were confident had misled them, the minds of brethren, with whom we were anxious to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. Events have taken place since the appointment of the Committee which invest the subject with additional importance. At that time the greatest danger immediately apprehended was a partial alienation, perhaps an external schism, among those who were at one in a common faith. But now more portentous calamities are dreaded. The determined zeal with which a policy, founded for the most part in the con-

viction that Slavery is a sin, is pressed upon the Federal Legislature justifies the gloomiest forebodings in relation to the integrity of the Union, and the stability of our free institutions. The question has passed from the Church to the State; it is no longer a debate among Christian Ministers and Christian men as to the terms of communion, and the rights of particular communities to the Christian name. It is now a question as to the equality of the States which compose this great Commonwealth of nations, and the obligation of the charter which binds them in federal alliance. The immense importance which, in this aspect, is given to the subject has induced the chairman of your Committee to present, upon his own responsibility, the following thoughts. He has been unable to consult the brethren who were appointed with him. And as he is deeply convinced that the position of the Southern, and perhaps, he may say, of the whole Presbyterian, Church, in relation to Slavery, is the only position which can save the Country from disaster and the Church from schism, he is quickened by the double consideration of patriotism and religion to record opinions which, however hastily expressed, have been maturely weighed.

The relation of the Church to Slavery cannot be definitely settled without an adequate apprehension of the nature and office of the Church itself. What, then, is the Church? It is not, as we fear too many are disposed to regard it, a moral institute of universal good, whose business it is to wage war upon every form of human ill, whether social, civil, political or moral, and to patronize every expedient which a romantic benevolence may suggest as likely to contribute to human comfort, or to mitigate the inconveniences of life. We freely grant, and sincerely rejoice in the truth, that the healthful operations of the Church, in its own appropriate sphere, react upon all the interests of man, and contribute to the progress and prosperity of society; but we are far from admitting either that it is the purpose of God, that, under the present dispensation of religion, all ill shall be banished

from this sublunary state, and earth be converted into a paradise; or, that the proper end of the Church is the direct promotion of universal good. It has no commission to construct society afresh, to adjust its elements in different proportions, to rearrange the distribution of its classes, or to change the forms of its political constitutions. The noble schemes of philanthropy which have distinguished Christian nations, their magnificent foundations for the poor, the maimed and the blind, the efforts of the wise and good to mitigate human misery, and to temper justice with mercy in the penal visitations of the law, the various associations that have been formed to check and abate particular forms of evil, have all been quickened into life by the spirit of Christianity. But still it is not the distinctive province of the Church to build asylums for the needy or insane, to organize societies for the improvement of the penal code, or for arresting the progress of intemperance, gambling or lust. The problems, which the anomalies of our fallen state are continually forcing on philanthropy, the Church has no right directly to solve. She must leave them to the Providence of God, and to human wisdom sanctified and guided by the spiritual influences which it is her glory to foster and cherish. The Church is a very peculiar society; *voluntary* in the sense that its members become so, not by constraint, but willingly; but, not in the sense that its doctrines, discipline and order are the creatures of human will, deriving their authority and obligation from the consent of its members. On the contrary, it has a fixed and unalterable Constitution; and that Constitution is the Word of God. It is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is enthroned in it as a sovereign. It can hear no voice but His, obey no commands but His, pursue no ends but His. Its officers are His servants bound to execute only His will; its doctrines are His teachings, which He as a prophet has given from God; its discipline His law, which He as king has ordained. The power of the Church, accordingly, is only ministerial and declarative. The Bible, and the Bible

alone, is her rule of faith and practice. She can announce what it teaches, enjoin what it commands, prohibit what it condemns, and enforce her testimonies by spiritual sanctions. Beyond the Bible she can never go, and apart from the Bible she can never speak. To the law and to the testimony, and to them alone, she must always appeal; and when they are silent it is her duty to put her hand upon her lips.

These principles, thus abstractly stated, are not likely to provoke opposition, but the conclusion which flows from them, and for the sake of which we have here stated them, has unfortunately been too much disregarded; and that is, that the Church is not at liberty to *speculate*. She has a *creed*, but no *opinions*. When she speaks, it must be in the name of the Lord, and her only argument is *Thus it is written*.

In conformity with this principle, has the Church any authority to declare Slavery to be sinful? Or, in other words, has the Bible, anywhere, either directly or indirectly, condemned the relation of master and servant as incompatible with the will of God?

We think there can be little doubt, that, if the Church had universally repressed the spirit of *speculation*, and had been content to stand by the naked testimony of God, we should have been spared many of the most effective dissertations against Slavery. Deduct the opposition to it which has arisen from sympathy with imaginary sufferings, from ignorance of its nature and misapplication of the crotchets of philosophers—deduct the opposition which is due to sentiment, romance or *speculation*, and how much will be found to have originated from the humble and devout study of the Scriptures? Will any man say that he who applies to them with an honest and unprejudiced mind, and discusses their teachings upon the subject, simply as a question of language and interpretation, will rise from their pages with the sentiments or spirit of a modern Abolitionist? Certain it is that no direct condemnation of Slavery can anywhere

be found in the Sacred Volume. A social element in all States, from the dawn of history until the present period, if it be the crying and damning sin which its enemies represent it to be, it is truly amazing that the Bible, which professes to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work, nowhere gives the slightest caution against this tremendous evil. The master is nowhere rebuked as a monster of cruelty and tyranny, the slave nowhere exhibited as the object of peculiar compassion and sympathy. The manner in which the relation itself is spoken of and its duties prescribed—the whole tone and air of the sacred writers—convey the impression that they themselves had not the least suspicion that they were dealing with a subject full of abominations and outrages. We read their language—cool, dispassioned, didactic. We find masters exhorted in the same connection with husbands, parents, magistrates; slaves exhorted in the same connection with wives, children and subjects. The Prophet or Apostle gives no note of alarm, raises no signal of distress when he comes to the slave and his master; and the unwary reader is in serious danger of concluding, that, according to the Bible, it is not much more harm to be a master than a father, a slave than a child. But this is not all. The Scriptures not only fail to condemn Slavery, they as distinctly sanction it as any other social condition of man. The Church was formally organized in the family of a slaveholder; the relation was divinely regulated among the chosen people of God; and the peculiar duties of the parties are inculcated under the Christian economy. These are facts which cannot be denied. Our argument then is this: If the Church is bound to abide by the authority of the Bible, and that alone, she discharges her whole office in regard to Slavery, when she declares what the Bible teaches, and enforces its laws by her own peculiar sanctions. Where the Scriptures are silent, she must be silent too. What the Scriptures have not made essential to a Christian profession she does not undertake to make so. What the

Scriptures have sanctioned she does not condemn. To this course she is shut up by the nature of her Constitution. If she had universally complied with the provisions of her charter, the angry discussions which have disgraced her courts, and produced bitterness and alienation among her own children in different countries and in different sections of the same land, would all have been prevented. The Abolition excitement derives most of its fury, and all its power, from the conviction which Christian people, without warrant from God, have industriously propagated, that Slavery, essentially considered, is a sin. They have armed the instincts of our moral nature against it. They have given the dignity of principle to the clamours of fanaticism; and the consequence is, that many Churches are distracted and the country reeling under a series of assaults in which treachery to man is justified as obedience to God. According to the rule of faith which gives to the Church her being, the relation of master and slave stands on the same footing with the other relations of life. In itself considered, it is not inconsistent with the will of God—it is *not* sinful. This is as much a doctrine of Christianity as the obligation of obedience to law. The Church, therefore, cannot undertake to disturb the relation. The Bible further teaches that there are duties growing out of this relation—duties of the master and duties of the slave. The Church must enforce these duties upon her own members. Here her jurisdiction stops. As a *Church*, as the visible kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, she must venture to interfere no further, unless it be to repress the agitation of those who assume to be wiser and purer than the Word of God. Those who corrupt the Scriptures, who profanely add to the duties of the Decalogue, are no more entitled to exemption from ecclesiastical discipline than any other disturbers of the peace or fomenters of faction and discord. It is not a question whether masters can be received into the communion of the saints, but it is a question whether those who exclude them should not themselves be rejected. We are far from insin-

uating that Abolitionists, *as such*, are unfit to be members of the Church. Slavery may evidently be contemplated in various aspects—as a social arrangement, involving a distinction of classes, like Oriental caste, or European gradation of ranks; as a civil relation, involving rights and obligations corresponding to its own nature; as a political condition, bearing upon the prosperity, happiness and growth of communities. In any or in all of these aspects, it may be opposed upon considerations of policy and prudence—as the despotism of Asia, the aristocracy of Europe, or the free institutions of America are opposed—without the imputation of sin upon the nature of the relation itself. The members of the Church, as citizens and as men, have the same right to judge of the expediency or inexpediency of introducing and perpetuating in their own soil this institution, as any other element of their social economy. But they transcend their sphere, and bring reproach upon the Scriptures as a rule of faith, when they go beyond these political considerations, and condemn Slavery as essentially repugnant to the will of God. They then corrupt the Scriptures, and are exposed to the malediction of those who trifle with the Divine Testimony. The Southern Churches have never asked their brethren in Europe, or in the non-slaveholding sections of their own land, to introduce Slavery among them; they have never asked them to approve it as the wisest and best constitution of society. All they have demanded is, that their brethren would leave it where God has left it, and deal with it, where it is found, as God has dealt with it. We insist upon it, that they should not disturb the tranquillity of the State by attempting to re-adjust our social fabric according to their own crotchets, when we ourselves, the only parties who have a right to meddle, are satisfied with our condition. We do not recognize them as political apostles, to whom God has transferred from us the right inherent in every other people to manage their affairs in their own way, so long as they keep within the limits of the Divine Law. If we fail in our social and political organizations, if, by con-

sequence, we lag behind in the progress of nations, we do not forfeit our right to self-government and become the minors and wards of wiser and stronger States. It is as preposterous in our Northern and European brethren to undertake to force their system upon us, or to break up our own in obedience to their notions, as it would be in us to wage a war upon theirs, on the ground that ours is better. Slavery, as a *political* question, is one in regard to which communities and States may honestly differ. But as a *moral* question, the Bible has settled it; and all we contend for is, that as *that* is a matter of liberty, we should not break fellowship for difference upon other grounds. If any man, however, is not content to stand by the Word of God, if any Church will not tolerate the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, that man and that Church cannot be vindicated from the charge of fomenting schism. They become justly exposed to censure. He who would debar a slaveholder from the table of the Lord, upon the simple and naked ground that he is a slaveholder, deserves himself to be excluded for usurping the prerogatives of Christ, and introducing terms of communion which cast reproach upon the conduct of Jesus and the Apostles. He violates the very charter of the Church—is a traitor to its fundamental law.

We have been struck with three circumstances in the conduct of what may be called *the Christian argument* against Slavery. The first is, that the principles from which, for the most part, the conclusion has been drawn are the abstrusest of all speculations upon the vexed question of "human rights," and not the obvious teachings of the Scriptures. The second is, that, when the argument has been professedly taken from the Bible, it has consisted in strained applications of passages, or forced inferences from doctrines, in open violation of the law that Scripture is its own interpreter. And the third is, that duties which the Bible enjoins are not only inadequately recognized, but forced into a system of morals whose fundamental principles exclude them.

1. The argument from philosophy—if the dogmas of sophists upon the nature and extent of human rights can be dignified with the title of *philosophy*—a Court of the Church cannot admit to be authoritative, without doing violence to her own Constitution. It is not denied that truth is truth, whether found in the Bible or out of it; and it is not denied that there is much truth, and truth of a most important kind, which it is not the province of Revelation to teach. But then it should be remembered that this is truth with which the Church, *as such*, has nothing to do. Neither should it be forgotten, that if human speculation conducts to a moral result directly contradictory of the Scriptures, faith convicts it of falsehood, the Word of God being a surer guide than the wit of man. When the question is, whether man is mistaken or the Word of God deceitful, to the Church the answer cannot be doubtful. And yet how much of the declamation against Slavery, in which Christian people are prone to indulge, is founded upon principles utterly unsupported by the Scriptures! One man very complacently tells us that every man is entitled to the fruit of his own labour; and that the master, in appropriating that of the slave, defrauds him of his right. The system is then denounced as one of robbery and plunder, which every good man should strive to banish from the earth. But where is the maxim, in the sense in which it is interpreted, to be found in the Scriptures? Where, even in any respectable system of Moral Philosophy? Where are we taught that the labour which a man puts forth in his own person is always his, or belongs to him of right, and cannot belong to another? How does it appear that what is physically his must be legally his? Another insists on the absolute equality of the species, and can find no arrangement in harmony with reason, but that which shall reduce the race to a stagnant uniformity of condition. But where do the Scriptures teach that an essential equality as men implies a corresponding equality of state? And who is authorized to limit the application of this sweeping princi-

ple to the sole relation of Slavery? It is as much the weapon of the socialist and leveller as of the Abolitionist, and the Church cannot accept it without renouncing the supremacy of the Scriptures; neither can she proceed, upon it, to excommunicate the slaveholder without fulminating her anathemas against the rich and the noble. Another insists upon the essential and indestructible personality of men, and vituperates Slavery as reducing human beings to the condition of chattels and of things, as if it were possible that human legislation could convert matter into mind or mind into matter; or, as if Slavery were not confessedly a relation of man to man. The arguments from this ground, and all similar grounds, can be easily answered. It will be found, in every case, either that the principle assumed is false in itself or distorted in its application; or, that the whole discussion proceeds on a gratuitous hypothesis in regard to the nature of Slavery. But whether they can be answered or not, no deductions of man can set aside the authority of God. The Bible is supreme, and as long as it allows the institution, the Church should not dare to rebuke it. In a court of Jesus Christ we would not think of presenting any consideration as conclusive but Thus saith the Lord.

2. But when the argument is professedly conducted from the Bible, it is in violation of the great principle that Scripture is its own interpreter. It is notorious—it is indeed universally conceded—that no express condemnations of Slavery have ever been produced from the Sacred Volume. The plan is, in the absence of anything precise and definite, to demonstrate an incongruity betwixt the analogy and general spirit of the Bible and the facts of Slavery. Some general principle is seized upon—such as the maxim of universal benevolence, or of doing unto others as we would have them do unto us—and brought into contrast with the degradation or abuses of bondage; or, specific precepts—such as that in relation to the family—are singled out, with which it is supposed Slavery renders it impossible to comply. The fallacy in these cases is easily detected. The same line of

argument, carried out precisely in the same way, would make havoc with all the institutions of civilized society. Indeed, it would be harder to defend from the Scriptures the righteousness of great possessions than the righteousness of Slavery. The same principle which would make the master emancipate his servant on the ground of benevolence, would make the rich man share his estates with his poor neighbours; and he who would condemn the institution as essentially and inherently evil, because it sometimes incidentally involves the disruption of family-ties, would condemn the whole texture of society in the non-slaveholding States, where the separation of parents and children, of husbands and wives, is often a matter of stern necessity. But however the argument might be answered, it is enough for a Christian man, who compares Scripture with Scripture, to know that Slavery is expressly excepted from the application of this or any other principle in the sweeping sense of the Abolitionists; it is not a case left to the determination of general principles—it is provided for in the law. If the Scriptures were silent in regard to it, we might appeal to analogies to aid us in reaching the will of God; but as they have mentioned the subject again and again, and stated the principles which are to be applied to it, we are shut up to these special testimonies.

3. Those who have been conversant with works against Slavery cannot have failed to be struck with the awkward and incongruous appearance, which, in these works, the commands of the Scriptures to masters and servants assume. These works lay down principles which make slavery an utter abomination—treason to man and rebellion against God. They represent it as an enormous system of cruelty, tyranny and impiety. They make it a fundamental duty to labour for its extirpation, and yet will not venture directly and boldly—at least Christian Abolitionists—to counsel insurrection or murder; they will even repeat the commands of the Bible, as if in mockery of all their speculations. Now we ask if these commands are not forced appendages to their moral

system? Are they not awkwardly inserted? The moral system of Abolitionists does not legitimately admit them; and if they were not restrained by respect for the Bible from carrying out their own doctrines, they would find themselves forced to recommend measures to the slave very different from obedience to his master. Those, accordingly, who prefer consistency to piety have not scrupled to reject these precepts, and to denounce the Book which enjoins them. They feel the incongruity betwixt their doctrines and these duties, and they do not hesitate to revile the Scriptures as the patron of tyranny and bondage. Admit the principle that Slavery, essentially considered, is not a sin, and the injunctions of Scripture are plain, consistent, intelligible; deny the principle, and the Bible seems to be made up of riddles.

Such is a general view of the Christian argument against Slavery. We are not conscious of having done it any injustice. We have endeavoured to study it impartially and candidly; but we confess that the conviction grows upon us, that those who most violently denounce this relation have formed their opinions in the first instance independently of the Bible, and then by special pleading have attempted to pervert its teachings to the patronage of their assumptions. They seem much more like apologists for the defects and omissions of the Scriptures, than like humble inquirers sitting at the feet of Jesus to learn His will. They have settled it in their own minds that Slavery is a sin; then the Bible must condemn it, and they set to work to make out the case that the Bible has covertly and indirectly done what they feel it ought to have done. Hence those peculiar features of the argument to which we have already adverted.

To this may be added a total misapprehension of the nature of the institution. Adjuncts and concomitants of Slavery are confounded with its essence, and abuses are seized upon as characteristic of the very genius of the institution.

If this method of argument is to be persisted in, the consequences must ultimately be injurious to the authority of the sacred writers. Those who have not a point to gain will easily detect the sophistry which makes the Scriptures subsidiary to Abolitionism; and if they are to receive it as a fundamental principle of morals that there can be no right to the labour of another independently of contract—and this is the essence of Slavery—they will be shut up to the necessity of denying the sufficiency and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. Like Morell, they will take their stand upon the defective morality of the Bible, and scout the idea of any external, authoritative rule of faith. The very same spirit of Rationalism, which has made the Prophets and Apostles succumb to philosophy and impulse in relation to the doctrines to salvation, lies at the foundation of modern speculation in relation to the rights of man. Opposition to Slavery has never been the offspring of the Bible. It has sprung from visionary theories of human nature and society; it has sprung from the misguided reason of man; it comes as natural, not as revealed truth; and when it is seen that the Word of God stands in the way of it, then the lively Oracles are stripped of their authority, and reduced to the level of mere human utterances. We affectionately warn our brethren of the mischiefs that must follow from their mode of conducting the argument against us—they are not only striking at Slavery, but they are striking at the foundation of our common faith. They are helping the cause of Rationalism. We need not repeat that a sound philosophy must ever coincide with Revelation, but what we insist upon is, that in cases of conflict the Scriptures must be supreme. Man may err, but God can never lie. If men are at liberty from their own heads to frame systems of morality, which render null and void the commandments of God, we see not why they are not equally at liberty to frame systems of doctrines, which render vain the covenant of grace. If they are absolutely their own law, why not absolutely their own teachers? It is, therefore, a very grave question which

they undertake to decide, who, in opposition to the example of the Apostles of our Lord, exclude masters from the communion of the saints and from the hopes of the Gospel.

The history of the world is full of illustrations that the foolishness of God is wiser than man. There is a wide application in the Scriptures, upon which alone depends the safety of States and the prosperity and success of the whole social economy. It rebukes alike the indifference and torpor which would repress the spirit of improvement and stiffen society into a fixed and lifeless condition, and the spirit of impatience and innovation which despises the lessons of experience and rushes into visionary schemes of reformation. It is to the healthful operation of all the limbs and members of the body politic that true progress consists; and he who knows that deformities may be cured by violent and hasty amputations may find, true, in removing what seemed to be only excrescences, he is inflicting a fatal stroke upon vital organs of the system. Slavery, to those who are accustomed to its operations, may seem to be an unnatural and monstrous condition, but it will be found that no principles can be pleaded to justify its removal which may not be applied with fatal success to the dearest interests of man. They who join the unhallowed crusade against the institutions of the South will have reason to repent, but they have set an engine in motion which cannot be arrested, until it has crushed and ground to powder the safeguards of life and property among themselves.

Deeply convinced, as we are, that the proper position of the Church in relation to Slavery is that which we have endeavored to present in these pages, we would earnestly and solemnly expostulate with those denominations at the North who have united in the outcry against us, and urge them to reconsider their steps in the fear of God and under the guidance of His Word. We ask them to take the Apostles as their guide. We are solemn and earnest, not only because we deplore a schism in the body of Christ, but because we deplore a schism among the confederated States of our

Union. We know what we say when we declare our deliberate conviction, that the continued agitation of Slavery must sooner or later shiver this government into atoms; and agitated it must continue to be, unless the Churches of Jesus Christ take their stand firmly and immovably upon the platform of the Bible. The people of the South ask nothing more; they will be content with nothing less. Let the Churches take this position, and the people of the North will find their moral instincts rallying to the support of our Federal Constitution, and will give to the winds a policy founded on the profane insinuation that Slavery is essentially a sin. Free-soilism is nothing but the application to politics of this unscriptural dogma. If Slavery be indeed consistent with the Bible, their responsibility is tremendous, who, in obedience to blind impulses and visionary theories, pull down the fairest fabric of government the world has ever seen, rend the body of Christ in sunder, and dethrone the Saviour in His own Kingdom. What a position for Churches of Jesus Christ—aiding and abetting on the one hand the restless and turbulent designs of agitators, demagogues and radical reformers, and giving countenance on the other to a principle which, if legitimately carried out, robs the Scriptures of their supremacy, and delivers us over to the folly and madness of Rationalism! Are our country, our Bible, our interests on earth and our hopes for heaven to be sacrificed on the altars of a fierce fanaticism? Are laws to be made which God never enacted, doctrines to be taught which the Apostles have condemned? And are they to be propagated and forced on men at the peril of everything that is dear and precious? We conjure *our brethren*—for such we shall still call them—we conjure our brethren to pause. We do not ask them to patronize Slavery; we do not wish them to change their own institutions; we only ask them to treat us as the Apostles treated the slaveholders of their day, and leave to us the liberty, which we accord to them, of conducting our affairs according to our own convictions of truth and duty. We ask it of them as Christians—as professed fol-

lowers of Christ; and if this reasonable demand is refused, upon them and not upon us must rest the perilous responsibility of the disasters that must inevitably follow. We are not alarmists, but Slavery is implicated in every fibre of Southern society; it is with us a vital question, and it is because we *know* that interference with it cannot and will not be much longer endured we raise our warning voice. We would save the country if we could. We would save the Constitution which our fathers framed, and we would have our children and our children's children, for countless generations, worship in the temple which our fathers reared. But this cannot be, unless our whole people shall be brought to feel that Slavery is no ground of discord, and that in Christ Jesus there is neither bond nor free. Would to God that this blessed consummation could be reached!

In the mean time, Christian masters at the South should address themselves with earnestness and vigour to the discharge of their solemn duties to their slaves. We would stir up their minds—not that they have been inattentive to the subject, but that they may take the more diligent heed. The most important and commanding of all their obligations is that which relates to religious instruction. Food and raiment and shelter their *interest* will prompt them to provide; but as the labour of the slave is expended for their benefit, they are bound, by the double consideration of justice and of mercy, to care for his soul. We rejoice that so much has already been done in imparting the Gospel to this class; and we hope that the time is not far distant when every Christian master will feel, that he is somewhat in the same sense responsible for the religious education of his slaves as for the religious education of his children. The Church, too, as an organized society, should give special attention to the subject There are many questions connected with it, which ought to be gravely and deliberately considered. We have no doubt that much effort has been uselessly expended, because injudiciously applied. Of one thing we are satisfied—their religious teachers should never be taken

from among themselves. There is too great a proneness to superstition and extravagance among the most enlightened of them, to admit of their being entrusted with the cure of souls. Their circumstances preclude them from the preparation and study which such a charge involves. There was wisdom in the statute of the Primitive Church, which allowed none but a freeman to be a Minister of the Gospel. To say nothing of the fact that their time is under the direction of their masters, we would as soon think of making Ministers and Elders, and organizing Churches, of children, as of according the same privilege to slaves. They would soon degrade piety into fanaticism, and the Church into bedlam. We rejoice that the Presbyteries of our own Synod have uniformly acted in conformity with this principle; and although our success may, by consequence, be slow, it will eventually be sure.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF SLAVERY.

I REJOICE in the solemnities of this night. I rejoice, not merely that a new house has been dedicated to the worship of God and the promulgation of the Gospel, which always affords a just occasion of congratulation and delight, but that a building has been erected, erected in the metropolis of the State, and erected at this particular time, for the special benefit of those who are emphatically the poor of our land. When the scheme was first projected, opposition was very naturally excited to the separation of masters and servants in the solemn offices of religion, which its execution, to some extent, involved. It was felt to be desirable that the different classes of the community should meet together, and experience the salutary influence upon their relations to each other, which the contemplation of their common relation to God was suited to exert. These considerations were not destitute of force, and they would have been entitled to prevail, had it not been obvious that the advantages of such promiscuous assemblies were dearly purchased by the exclusion of immense numbers of the Coloured Population from all adequate opportunities of religious instruction at all. The question was soon found to be partial separation, or a partial diffusion of the Gospel among the slaves. An enlarged philanthropy prevailed over sentiment; and the completion of this structure is a declaration to the world, that neither apprehensions of safety to ourselves nor of injury to our servants, that neither mawkish sentimentalism nor absurd jealousy, shall deter us from providing the Negro with the armour of salvation.

This triumph of Christian benevolence is the more illustrious, as having taken place in a community which has been warned by experience to watch, with jealous care all combinations of the blacks. Religion has been so often the cloak of designing knaves, and religious assemblies so often prostituted to the unhallowed purposes of anarchy and crime, that good men began to apprehend that religion itself might be ultimately excluded as a measure of police. But the erection of this house is a public proof, that the good people of Charleston can be bribed by no temptations of interest or security to confound the abuse with the lawful uses of a thing; and that while they take every precaution which wisdom and prudence suggest to guard effectually against the one, they will not be driven into any mad crusade against the other. Bowing with reverence to the authority of God, and recognizing the obligation to communicate His will to the children of men, they are determined to make known His Gospel, in its simplicity and purity, without any checks or hindrances but those which shall prevent religious conventions from being turned into conventions of crime. All they demand is that it shall be Christianity which is taught—the Christianity contained in the Bible, proclaimed by Apostles and Prophets, and sealed by the blood of a goodly company of Martyrs and Confessors. The name of Jesus is not a name for conspirators to conjure with—it carries no danger with it; the doctrines of Jesus are doctrines according to godliness, and our people, we rejoice to say, have refused, under any pretext of expediency or policy, to league with Herod and Pontius Pilate in an unholy combination against the Anointed of the Lord. Time will show that they have acted wisely, and that this church will prove a stronger fortress against insubordination and rebellion than weapons of brass or iron.

The juncture at which you have been led to begin and carry out this undertaking—it is but just to say—affords a proof of your homage to religion, and a vindication of your character, as beautiful as they are conspicuous. The slave-

holding States of this confederacy have been placed under the ban of the public opinion of the civilized world. The "philanthropy" of Christendom seems to have concentrated its sympathies upon us. We have been denounced, with every epithet of vituperation and abuse, as conspirators against the dignity of man, traitors to our race, and rebels against God. Overlooking, with a rare expansion of benevolence, the evils which press around their own doors, the vices and crimes and sufferings of their own neighbours and countrymen, the "philanthropists" of Europe and this country can find nothing worth weeping for but the sufferings and degradation of the Southern slave, nothing worth reviling but the avarice, inhumanity and cruelty of the Southern master, and nothing worth labouring to extirpate but the system which embodies these outrages and wrongs. So monstrous are the misrepresentations which ignorance, malice and fanaticism are constantly and assiduously propagating in regard to this relation among us, that if our names were not actually written under the pictures, we should never suspect that they were intended for us. In the grave discussions of philosophy, the solemn instructions of the pulpit, the light effusions of the poet, in popular assemblies and legislative halls, among all classes and conditions of men, we are held up to execration and contempt; and our society is shunned as scrupulously as if the taint of leprosy adhered to us. Even those, who cannot find it in their hearts to join in the violent maledictions which zeal for humanity has piled upon us, never venture upon a plea of justification in our defence. They pity us; they lament our lot, admit that our case is bad, desperately bad, but then we are not so much to be blamed! They curse us in their sympathies.

This insane fury of philanthropy has not been content with speculating upon our degradation and wretchedness at a distance. It has aimed at stirring up insurrection in the midst of us. In the sacred names of religion and liberty, private efforts have been made to turn the hearts of servants against their masters; and public institutions, which the

implied faith of the country should render only vehicles of convenience, have been treacherously converted into engines of sedition and organs of tumult. Outlaws from humanity, the Constitution of the Country has been unable to protect us from the machinations of those who, according to the legitimate use of language, can be much more appropriately styled *manstealers* than ourselves. At this moment the Union is shaken to its centre by the prevalence of sentiment over reason and truth; and the remarkable spectacle is exhibited of a people constrained in conscience to violate the faith of treaties, the solemnity of contracts, and the awful sanctity of an oath—constrained in conscience to trample in the dust the plainest obligations of duty, rather than infringe the speculative rights of man. A spurious charity for a comparatively small class in the community is dictating the subversion of the cherished institutions of our fathers, and the hopes of the human race. The utter ruin of this vast imperial Republic is to be achieved as a trophy to the progress of human development.

That we should be passive spectators of these scenes of madness and confusion, that we should be indifferent to the condemnation of the civilized world, and especially to efforts to put in jeopardy our lives as well as our property, is not to be expected. The fear of good men among ourselves has been, that the natural exasperation, which so much unmerited censure and such extraordinary interference with our affairs have a tendency to produce, would provoke us to extremities resulting rather from the violence of resentment than the dictates of prudence. Perhaps, at the first alarming indications of our moral position in the estimate of the world, we indulged too much in the language of defiance, and permitted ourselves to yield to suggestions of policy, which, in our calmer moments, neither the reason nor the conscience of the country should approve. It is useless to deny that we were tempted to resort to measures of legislation, which, while they contribute nothing to our security, have given a pretext to the calumnies of our enemies, and

embarrassed our defence in the hands of our friends. But I feel bound in candour to say, that, under the extraordinary pressure which has been upon us, it is a matter of astonishment and of devout thanksgiving to God, that we have been able, in the regulation of our domestic institutions, to preserve so much moderation, prudence, humanity and caution. When the first explosion had passed off, we consented to plead our cause at the bar of the world; we looked more narrowly into the nature and organization of society, at the origin and extent of the rights of man; and, feeling justified in our own consciences and in the sight of God, we endeavoured to conduct ourselves with the dignity which a consciousness of rectitude inspires, and to deserve, if we cannot obtain, the confidence of mankind. That in the conduct of our plea we have contributed our full proportion to the philosophy of government, that we have done much to expose the fallacies and dangers of prevailing theories in regard to the scope and purpose of political institutions, that we have been eminently conservative in our influence upon the spirit of the age, it seems to us, cannot be decently denied. To say that we have run into no extravagancies in our defences of Slavery, that we have not, like all controvertists, been perplexed with the ambiguity of terms, and betrayed by rashness into untenable positions, is to say that we are angels and not men. But, the wonder is, that our excesses have not been greater and more disastrous. With infidelity on the one hand, suggesting the short reply to the indictment of the world, that our Negroes are "not of the same blood with ourselves"—a plea which, if it had been admitted, would have justly drawn down the curse of God, as well as the execrations of the race; with the dictates of a narrow expediency on the other, suggesting that our safety depended upon the depression and still lower degradation of the black race: with Scylla on the one side and Charybdis on the other, the wonder is, that we have not been frightened from our propriety, and driven to the adoption of more

measures that would seem to justify the censures of our enemies.

The inception and successful progress of this enterprise encourage the hope that we mean to maintain our moderation. It is a public testimony to our faith, that the Negro is of one blood with ourselves, that he has sinned as we have, and that he has an equal interest with us in the great redemption. Science, falsely so called, may attempt to exclude him from the brotherhood of humanity. Men may be seeking eminence and distinction by arguments which link him with the brute; but the instinctive impulses of our nature, combined with the plainest declarations of the Word of God, lead us to recognize in his form and lineaments, in his moral, religious and intellectual nature, the same humanity in which we glory as the image of God. We are not ashamed to call him our *brother*. The subjugation of the fears and jealousy which a systematic misrepresentation of religion, on the part of its inveterate opposers, has had a tendency to produce, is a public declaration to the world, that, in our philosophy, right is the highest expediency, and obedience to God the firmest security of communities as well as individuals. We have not sought the protection of our property in the debasement of our species; we have not maintained our own interests in this world by the deliberate sacrifice of the eternal interests of the thousands who look to us for the way of salvation. Under the infallible conviction—infallible, because the offspring of the Word of God—that he who walketh uprightly walketh surely, we have endeavoured to carry out a plan which shall have the effect of rendering to our servants, in the most comprehensive sense, "that which is just and equal." If others feel called to seduce them into grievous crime, and to ply them with instigations to insurrection and tumult, our firmest precautions against the threatened danger shall be the faithful discharge of our duties, which, while it preserves a conscience void of offence toward God, conciliates the confidence and affections of man.

If God shall enable us to maintain the moderation and dignity which become us, and to set an example of faithfulness and diligence in the discharge of the duties which spring from the relation of master and servant, it will be an omen of good. It will be a signal proof that He has not condemned us, and a cheering token that in the vicissitudes of human affairs truth will ultimately prevail, and we shall stand acquitted at the bar of the world. The agitations which are convulsing the kingdoms of Europe, the mad speculations of philosophers, the excesses of unchecked democracy, are working out some of the most difficult problems of political and social science; and when the tumult shall have subsided and reason resumed her ascendency, it will be found that the very principles upon which we have been accustomed to justify Southern Slavery are the principles of regulated liberty; that in defending this institution we have really been upholding the civil interests of mankind, resisting alike the social anarchy of communism and the political anarchy of licentiousness, that we have been supporting representative, republican government against the despotism of masses on the one hand, and the supremacy of a single will on the other.

God has not permitted such a remarkable phenomenon as the unanimity of the civilized world, in its execration of Slavery, to take place without design. This great battle with the Abolitionists has not been fought in vain. The muster of such immense forces, the fury and bitterness of the conflict, the disparity in resources of the parties in the war, the conspicuousness, the unexampled conspicuousness of the event, have all been ordered for wise and beneficent results; and when the smoke shall have rolled away, it will be seen that a real progress has been made in the practical solution of the problems which produced the collision.

What disasters it will be necessary to pass through before the nations can be taught the lessons of Providence, what lights shall be extinguished, and what horrors experienced, no human sagacity can foresee. But that the world

is now the theatre of an extraordinary conflict of great principles, that the foundations of society are about to be explored to their depths, and the sources of social and political prosperity laid bare—that the questions in dispute involve all that is dear and precious to man on earth, the most superficial observer cannot fail to perceive. Experiment after experiment may be made, disaster succeed disaster, in carrying out the principles of an atheistic philosophy, until the nations, wearied and heart-sickened with changes without improvement, shall open their eyes to the real causes of their calamities, and learn the lessons which wisdom shall evolve from the events that have passed. Truth must triumph. God will vindicate the appointments of His Providence: and if our institutions are indeed consistent with righteousness and truth, we can calmly afford to bide our time; we can watch the storm which is beating furiously against us, without terror or dismay; we can receive the assault of the civilized world, trusting in Him who has all the elements at His command, and can save as easily by one as a thousand. If our principles are true, the world must come to them; and we can quietly appeal from the verdict of existing generations to the more impartial verdict of the men who shall have seen the issue of the struggle in which we are now involved. It is not the narrow question of Abolitionism or Slavery—not simply whether we shall emancipate our negroes or not; the real question is the relations of man to society, of States to the individual, and of the individual to States—a question as broad as the interests of the human race.

These are the mighty questions which are shaking thrones to their centres, upheaving the masses like an earthquake, and rocking the solid pillars of this Union. The parties in this conflict are not merely Abolitionists and Slaveholders; they are Atheists, Socialists, Communists, Red Republicans, Jacobins on the one side, and the friends of order and regulated freedom on the other. In one word, the world is the battle ground, Christianity and Atheism the combat-

ants, and the progress of humanity the stake. One party seems to regard society, with all its complicated interests, its divisions and subdivisions, as the machinery of man, which, as it has been invented and arranged by his ingenuity and skill, may be taken to pieces, reconstructed, altered or repaired, as experience shall indicate defects or confusion in the original plan. The other party beholds in it the ordinance of God; and contemplates "this little scene of human life" as placed in the middle of a scheme, whose beginnings must be traced to the unfathomable depths of the past, and whose development and completion must be sought in the still more unfathomable depths of the future—a scheme, as Butler expresses it, "not fixed, but progressive, every way incomprehensible;" in which, consequently, irregularity is the confession of our ignorance, disorder the proof of our blindness, and with which it is as awful temerity to tamper as to sport with the name of God.

It is a great lesson, that, as the weakness of man can never make that straight which God hath made crooked, true wisdom consists in discharging the duties of every relation; and the true secret of progress is in the improvement and elevation which are gradually superinduced by this spirit.

The part, accordingly, which is assigned to us, in the tumult of the age, is the maintenance of the principles upon which the security of social order and the development of humanity depend, in their application to the distinctive institutions which have provoked upon us the malediction of the world. The Apostle briefly sums up all that is incumbent, at the present crisis, upon the slaveholders of the South in the words: Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. It would be an useless waste of time to spend many words in proving that the servants contemplated by the Apostle were slaves. Finding it impossible to deny that Slavery, as an existing element of society, is

actually sanctioned by Christ and His Apostles, those who would preserve some show of consistency in their veneration of the Scriptures, and their condemnation of us, resolve the conduct of the founders of Christianity into motives of prudence and considerations of policy. While they admit that the letter of the Scriptures is distinctly and unambiguously in our favour, they maintain that their spirit is against us; and, that our Saviour was content to leave the destruction of whatsoever was morally wrong in the social fabric to the slow progress of changes in individual opinions, wrought by the silent influence of religion, rather than endanger the stability of governments by sudden and disastrous revolutions. "The Apostle does not," says a learned commentator, "interfere with any established relations, however, as in the case of Slavery, morally and politically wrong, but only enjoins the discharge of the duties which the very persons themselves recognize." It is not for me to explain how the imputation of a defective morality can be reconciled with the great Protestant dogma, that the Bible is an adequate rule of faith and practice; or upon what principles slaveholders should be rejected from the fellowship of the Christian Church now, when Paul received them as brethren, and sanctioned the bondage in which they held their servants.

But it may be worth while to expose the confusion of ideas, from which this distinction betwixt the letter and the spirit of the Gospel has arisen, and which has been a source of serious perplexity both to the defenders and the enemies of Slavery. Many Christian men have been led, in reference to this subject, to lend their sanction to principles which, in all other applications, they would reject with abhorrence, because they have felt that the genius and temper of Christianity were inconsistent with the genius and temper of Slavery; while others, driven to the opposite extreme, from a faithful study of the letter, have been led to deny the principles which lie at the foundation of all human progress, and to assume an attitude in regard to

human rights and liberty, which, in their abstract forms, can be characterized as little less than monstrous.

That is a desperate cause which is either incompatible with the general tone and spirit of Christianity, or with the progress of true liberty, which is only another name for the social and political development of man. If it can be shown that Slavery contravenes the spirit of the Gospel, that as a social relation it is essentially unfavourable to the cultivation and growth of the graces of the Spirit, that it is unfriendly to the development of piety and to communion with God; or, that it retards the onward progress of man, that it hinders the march of society to its destined goal, and contradicts that supremacy of justice which is the soul of the State and the life-blood of freedom—if these propositions can be satisfactorily sustained, then it is self-condemned; religion and philanthropy alike require us to labour for its destruction, and every good man amongst us would feel bound to contribute to its removal; and even the voice of patriotism would demand that we should wipe from our country the foul reproach of standing in the way of the destined improvement of mankind.

The confusion upon this subject has arisen from a twofold misapprehension—one in relation to the nature of the Slavery tolerated in the letter of the Scriptures, and the other in relation to the spirit of Christianity itself.

It is common to describe Slavery as the property of man in man—as the destruction of all human and personal rights, the absorption of the humanity of one individual into the will and power of another. "The very idea of a slave," says Dr. Channing,[1] "is that he belongs to another, that he is bound to live and labour for another, to be another's instrument, and to make another's will his habitual law, however adverse to his own." "We have thus," says he in another place,[2] "established the reality and sacredness of human rights; and, that Slavery is an infraction of these is

[1] Works, vol. ii., p. 17. Tenth complete edition. Boston, 1849.
[2] Ibid., vol. ii., p. 46.

too plain to need any laboured proof. Slavery violates not one but all, and violates them not incidentally, but necessarily, systematically, from its very nature." In other words, in every system of Slavery, from the operation of its inherent and essential principles, the slave ceases to be a person, a man, and becomes a mere instrument or thing. Dr. Channing does not charge this result upon the relation as it obtains under particular codes, or at particular times, or in particular places. He says, distinctly and emphatically, that it violates all human rights, *not incidentally*, but *necessarily, systematically*, from *its very nature*. It belongs to the very essence of Slavery to divest its victims of humanity.

"Slavery," says Professor Whewell,[1] "is contrary to the fundamental principles of morality. It neglects the great primary distinction of *persons* and *things*—converting a person into a thing, an object merely passive, without any recognized attributes of human nature. A slave is, in the eye of the State which stamps him with that character, not acknowledged as a man. His pleasures and pains, his wishes and desires, his needs and springs of action, his thoughts and feelings, are of no value whatever in the eye of the community. He is reduced to the level of the brutes. Even his crimes, as we have said, are not acknowledged as wrongs, lest it should be supposed, that, as he may do a wrong, he may suffer one. And as there are for him no wrongs because there are no rights, so there is for him nothing morally right—there is, as we have seen, nothing conformable to the supreme rule of Human Nature: for the supreme rule of his condition is the will of his master. He is thus divested of his moral nature, which is contrary to the great principle we have already laid down, that all men are moral beings; a principle which, we have seen, is one of the universal truths of morality, whether it be taken as a principle of Justice or of Humanity. It is a principle of Justice, depending upon the participation of all in a com-

[1] Elements of Morality, vol. i., pp. 372, 373. American edition.

mon Humanity; it is a principle of Humanity, as authoritative and cogent as the fundamental idea of Justice."

If this be a just description of Slavery, the wonder is, not that the civilized world is now indignant at its outrages and wrongs, but that it has been so slow in detecting its enormities; that mankind, for so many centuries, acquiesced in a system which contradicted every impulse of nature, every whisper of conscience, every dictate of religion—a system as monstrously unnatural as a general effort to walk upon the head or think with the feet. I have, however, no hesitation in saying, that, whatever may be the technical language of the law in relation to certain aspects in which Slavery is contemplated, the ideas of personal rights and personal responsibility pervade the whole system. It is a relation of man to man—a form of civil society of which persons are the only elements—and not a relation of man to things. Under the Roman code, in which more offensive language than that employed by ourselves was used in reference to the subject, the Apostles did not regard the personality of the slave as lost or swallowed up in the propriety of the master. They treat him as a man, possessed of certain rights, which it was injustice to disregard; and, make it the office of Christianity to protect these rights by the solemn sanctions of religion—to enforce upon masters the necessity, the moral obligation, of rendering to their bondmen that which is just and equal. Paul treats the services of slaves as *duties*—not like the toil of the ox or the ass, a labour extracted by the stringency of discipline, but a moral debt, in the payment of which they were rendering a homage to God. "Servants," says he,[1] "be obedient to them that are your masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatever good thing any man doeth, the same shall

[1] Ephes. iv. 5–9.

he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." I need not say to those who are acquainted with the very elements of moral philosophy, that obedience, except as a figured term, can never be applied to any but rational, intelligent, responsible agents. It is a voluntary homage to law—implies moral obligation, and a sense of duty, and can only, in the way of analogy, be affirmed of the instinctive submission of brutes, or the mechanical employment of instruments and things.[1]

The Apostle not merely recognizes the moral agency of slaves, in the phraseology which he uses, but treats them as possessed of conscience, reason and will, by the motives which he presses. He says to them, in effect, that their services to their masters are duties which they owe to God—that a moral character attaches to their works, and that they are the subjects of praise or blame according to the principles upon which their obedience is rendered. "The blind passivity of a corpse, or the mechanical subserviency of a tool"—which Dr. Channing and Prof. Whewell regard as constituting the very essence of every system of Slavery—precluding as it does every idea of merit or demerit, of approbation or of censure, never seems to have entered the head of the Apostle. He considered Slavery as a social and political economy, in which relations subsisted betwixt moral, intelligent, responsible beings, involving reciprocal rights and

[1] "By a license of speech," says one who can be accused of no patronage to Slavery—"by a license of speech—pardonable in cases where no consequences result from it—we employ the word so improperly as to say that the sculptor's chisel obeys his hand; but it would be an insufferable affectation to use the abstract term *obedience* in such instances, as if the tool were consciously fraught with a moral quality. Nor may we stretch the proprieties of speech so far as to apply the abstract term even to the hand of the artist; the hand, it is true, obeys the mind—but how absurd would it be to commend the hand for its *obedience*, and scarcely less so to speak of the obedience of a well-trained horse; although, by an admissible analogy, we say he obeys the hand and leg of his rider. The fiery, yet obsequious animal, while yielding himself to the will of his rider, knows nothing of obedience, because his nature does not include that moral liberty which is the source and soul of the virtue so named."—*Taylor's Loyola and Jesuitism*, p. 286.

reciprocal obligations. There was a right to command on the one hand, an obligation to obey on the other. Both parties might be guilty of injustice and of wrong; the master might prostitute his power by tyranny, cruelty, and iniquitous exactions; the servant might evade his duty from indolence, treachery, or obstinate self-will. Religion held the scales of justice between them, and enforced fidelity upon each by the awful sanctions of eternity. This was clearly the aspect in which the Apostle contemplated the subject.

The state of things so graphically described and eloquently deplored by the great father of Unitarian Christianity in America is a palpable impossibility. The constitution of the human mind is in flagrant contradiction to the absorption of the conscience, will, and understanding of one man into the personality of another—it is a thing which cannot be conceived; and if it ever could take place, the termination of all responsibility on the part of the slave would render it ridiculous to labour for his spiritual improvement, or attribute to him any other immortality than that which Indian fables ascribe to the dog as the faithful companion of his master. And yet upon this absurdity—that Slavery divests its victims of humanity, that it degrades them from the rank of responsible and voluntary agents to the condition of tools or brutes—the whole philosophical argument against the morality of the system, as an existing institution, is founded. Moralists prove that man can hold no property in man; that the conscience, in other words, *the moral and responsible agency*, of one person—for to this point the question is reduced—can never be owned by another; it is not an article of barter or exchange; the individual cannot transfer it from himself, and the system which attempts the impossibility is an outrage upon humanity. We cheerfully admit that no man can sell his soul to another; and if the transaction were possible, it would evidently be a most damning sin. "If suicide"—we use the words of one of the profoundest think-

ers of the day,[1]—"if suicide be a crime—and who but the Atheist questions this?—so would be the amputation of a limb for no surgical reason; and so would it be a crime and a frightful impiety to swallow a drug for the purpose of effecting a paralysis of one side, or the extinction of a sense—of sight or of hearing. But is not man's individual mind and conscience, with its voluntary convictions of truth and virtue, a faculty and an element of human nature? Is not the freedom of the will a sacred bestowment, which every responsible being has received from his Maker? What shall a man accept in exchange, either for his soul or for any one of its elementary prerogatives? Neither his soul, nor any of its powers, is really at his disposal; for not only are these powers in themselves beyond all price, but if a price could be adduced that should be their equivalent in whole or in part, the offer could not be listened to; the proposal is a blasphemy, and it is a blasphemy in the intention, notwithstanding that such an intention could never actually be carried out." We grant most cheerfully—and we make an admission in no way inconsistent with Southern Slavery, or the Slavery sanctioned in the Bible—that though "the human soul may be lost, it cannot either be sold or made a gift of to another; that conscience may be bound or may be slaughtered, but cannot be transferred to another's keeping; that moral responsibility, instead of being shifted entirely from one to another, or instead of being shared between two, each taking a half or a portion, is doubled, whenever it is attempted to be transferred, or to be deposited, or to be pawned."[2]

The "property of man in man"—a fiction to which even the imagination cannot give consistency—is the miserable cant of those who would storm by prejudice what they cannot demolish by argument. We do not even pretend that the organs of the body can be said strictly to belong to another. The limbs and members of my servant are not mine, but his; they are not tools and instruments which I

[1] Taylor's Loyola and Jesuitism, p. 289. Amer. edition. [2] Ibid.

can sport with at pleasure, but the sacred possession of a human being, which cannot be invaded without the authority of law, and for the use of which he can never be divested of his responsibility to God.

If, then, Slavery is not inconsistent with the existence of personal rights and of moral obligation, it may be asked, In what does its peculiarity consist? What is it that makes a man a slave? We answer, The obligation to labour for another, determined by the Providence of God, independently of the provisions of a contract. The right which the master has is a right, not to the *man*, but to his *labour;* the duty which the slave owes is the service which, in conformity with this right, the master exacts. The essential difference betwixt free labour and slave labour is, that one is rendered in consequence of a contract; the other is rendered in consequence of a command. The labourers in each case are equally moral, equally responsible, equally men. But they work upon different principles.

It is strange that Channing and Whewell should have overlooked the essential distinction of this form of service, as it lies patent in the writings of philosophers who preceded them. The definition given by Paley, a man preeminently marked by perspicuity of thought and vigour of expression, is exactly the same in spirit with our own. In the actual condition of society, the intervention of a contract is not always a matter of very great moment, since it is not always a security to freedom of choice. The Providence of God marks out for the slave the precise services, in the lawful commands of the master, which it is the Divine will that he should render. The painful necessities of his case are often as stringent upon the free labourer, and determine, with as stern a mandate, what contracts he shall make. Neither can he be said to select his employments. God allots to each his portion—places one immediately under command, and leaves the other not unfrequently a petitioner for a master.

Whatever control the master has over the person of the

slave is subsidiary to this right to his labour; what he sells is not the man, but the property in his services. True he chastises the man, but the punishments inflicted for disobedience are no more inconsistent with personal responsibilities than the punishments inflicted by the law for breaches of contract. On the contrary, punishment in contradistinction from suffering always implies responsibility, and a right which cannot be enforced is a right, which society, as an organized community, has not yet acknowledged. The chastisements of slaves are accordingly no more entitled to awaken the indignation of loyal and faithful citizens—however pretended philanthropists may describe the horrors of the scourge and the lash—than the penalties of disgrace, imprisonment, or death, which all nations have inflicted upon crimes against the State. All that is necessary, in any case, is that the punishment should be *just*. Pain unrighteously inflicted is cruelty, whether that cruelty springs from the tyranny of a single master, or the tyranny of that greater master, the State. Whether adequate provisions shall be made to protect the slave from inhumanity and oppression, whether he shall be exempt from suffering except for disobedience and for crime, are questions to be decided by the law of the land; and in this matter the codes of different nations, and of the same nation at different times, have been various. Justice and religion require that such provisions should be made. It is no part of the essence of Slavery, however, that the rights of the slave should be left to the caprice or to the interest of the master; and in the Southern States provisions are actually made—whether adequate or inadequate it is useless here to discuss—to protect him from want, cruelty, and unlawful domination. Provisions are made which recognize the doctrine of the Apostle, that he is a subject of rights, and that justice must be rendered to his claims. When Slavery is pronounced to be essentially sinful, the argument cannot turn upon incidental circumstances of the system, upon the defective arrangement of the details, the inadequate securi-

ties which the law awards against the infringement of acknowledged rights; it must turn upon the nature of the relation itself, and must boldly attempt to prove that he ceases to be a man, who is under obligation, without the formalities of a contract, to labour under the direction and for the benefit of another. If such a position is inconsistent with the essential elements of humanity, then Slavery is inhuman; if society, on the other hand, has distinctly recognized the contrary as essential to good order, as in the case of children, apprentices and criminals, then Slavery is consistent with the rights of man, and the pathetic declamation of Abolitionists falls to the ground.

This view of the subject exposes the confusion—which obtains in most popular treatises of morals—of Slavery with *involuntary servitude*. The service, in so far as it consists in the motions of the limbs or organs of the body, must be voluntary, or it could not exist at all. If by *voluntary* be meant, however, that which results from hearty consent, and is accordingly rendered with cheerfulness, it is precisely the service which the law of God enjoins. Servants are exhorted to obey from considerations of duty; to make conscience of their tasks, with good-will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men. Whether, in point of fact, their service, in this sense, shall be voluntary will depend upon their moral character. But the same may be said of free labour. There are other motives beside the lash that may drive men to toil, when they are far from toiling with cheerfulness or good-will. Others groan under their burdens as well as slaves, and many a man who works by contract is doomed to an "involuntary servitude," which he as thoroughly detests as the most faithless slave who performs nothing but the painful drudgery of eye-service.

There is a moral bondage, the most galling and degrading species of servitude, in which he may be held, as with chains of brass, who scorns to call *master* any man on earth. Those who have most patiently studied the ends of government and the theory of political society, who are best pre-

pared to solve the problems connected with the nature and extent of the individual restraints which the security of public order demands—those who have most profoundly investigated the whole question of civil and political liberty, may yet be slaves. They may submit to the sway of a fiercer and more cruel tyrant than any despot who ever wielded a sceptre on earth. "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (or slave) of sin." This moral slavery, from which it was the professed object of their pretended philosophy to deliver men, was a subject of fruitful and eloquent declamation among the ancient moralists, philosophers and poets. "Who," says Seneca, "is not a slave? One is in bondage to lust, another to avarice, another to ambition, and all to fear." "No bondage," he adds, "is more grievous than that which is voluntary." "To be a slave to the passions," says Pythagoras, "is more grievous than to be a slave to tyrants." "Count no one free," says Plato, "who is intent on the indulgence of wicked passions. Such men serve more cruel masters than those who obtain their slaves by inheritance and purchase, with a right to enforce obedience." "All wicked men," says Cicero, "are slaves. If slavery be the obedience of a broken and an abject mind, deprived of the freedom of will, as indeed it is, who can deny that all frivolous, covetous, wicked men are slaves?" "If you are subject to the perturbations of fear, the tumult of corrupt desire, or the violence of anger, you endure," says Claudian, "the yoke of bondage." This slavery to sin is true Slavery; it is that which degrades, which renders man unfit for the improvement of his nature, the society of angels, and the favour of God. The external circumstances in which men are placed, the number and variety of their civil and social privileges, the outward advantages of rank, birth or fortune,—these are not the things which ennoble or depress us in the scale of excellence. The monarch on his throne, with prostrate millions around him, may be little, mean, despicable in the sight of the holy and the good,

while the poor slave, in his humble hovel, or on his pallet of straw, may possess a dignity and moral grandeur which assert his affinity with heaven. There is a freedom which is the end and glory of man—the only freedom which the pen of inspiration has commended, and which, from its very nature, is independent of the decrees of kings or the mandates of States. It is *the* freedom which God approves, which Jesus bought by his blood, and the Holy Spirit effectually seals by His grace—the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. It consists essentially in the dominion of rectitude, in the emancipation of the will from the power of sin, the release of the affections from the attractions of earth, the exemption of the understanding from the deceits of prejudice and error. It is a freedom which the *truth* of God brings with it—a freedom enjoyed by the martyr at the stake, the slave in his chains, the prisoner in his dungeon, as well as the king upon his throne. Independent of time or place, or the accidents of fortune, it is the *breath* of the soul as regenerated and redeemed; and can no more be torn from us than the atmosphere of heaven can be restrained. "If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." The ancient philosophers caught a glimpse of it when they declaimed upon virtue as the end and perfection of our being; Cicero almost seized it when he described him alone as possessed of freedom of will, who pursues rectitude, rejoices in duty and regulates his conduct by wisdom and prudence. This freedom makes man truly a man; and it is precisely the assertion of this freedom, this dominion of rectitude, this supremacy of right, which the Apostle enjoins upon slaves, when he exhorts them to obey their masters in singleness of heart as unto Christ, to despise eye-service, but to do their work as in the eye of God. To obey under the influence of these motives is to be slaves no longer. This is a *free* service—a service which God accepts as the loyal homage of the soul, and which proclaims them to be the Lord's freed-men, while they honour their masters on earth. Such slavery might be their glory—might fit them

for thrones in the kingdom of God. So far was the Apostle, therefore, from regarding "involuntary servitude" as the characteristic of Slavery, that he condemns such servitude as a sin. He treats it as something that is abject, mean, despicable; but insists, on the other hand, that Slavery dignifies and ennobles the servant who obeys from the heart.

But while it may be admitted that Slavery is not absolutely inconsistent with moral responsibility, or the freedom of a moral agent, it may be asked whether the slave is not stripped of some of the rights which belong to him essentially as a man; and in this view, whether the relation is not incompatible with the spirit of the Gospel, which asserts and promotes the dignity and perfection of our race; in other words, whether there is not a limitation upon the moral freedom of the slave—whether his situation does not preclude him from discharging his *whole* duty as a man; and, therefore, whether the relation is not ultimately destructive of the full complement of human rights.

This question, it seems to me, comprises the whole moral difficulty of Slavery; and it is at this point of the discussion, that the friends and enemies of the system are equally tempted to run into extravagance and excess; the one party denying the inestimable value of freedom, the other exaggerating the nature and extent of human rights, and both overlooking the real scope and purpose of the Gospel, in its relation to the present interests of man.

That the design of Christianity is to secure the perfection of the race is obvious from all its arrangements; and that, when this end shall have been consummated, Slavery must cease to exist is equally clear. This is only asserting that there will be no bondage in heaven. Among beings of the same nature, each relatively perfect, there can be no other inequalities than those which spring from superior endowments; the outward advantages of all must be of the same kind, though they may vary in degrees proportioned to the capacities of the individuals to enjoy them. If Adam had never sinned and brought death into the world, with all our

woe, the bondage of man to man would never have been instituted; and when the effects of transgression shall have been purged from the earth, and the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness given to the saints, all bondage shall be abolished. In this sense Slavery is inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel—that it contemplates a state of things, an existing economy, which it is the design of the Gospel to remove. Slavery is a part of the curse which sin has introduced into the world, and stands in the same general relations to Christianity as poverty, sickness, disease or death. In other words, it is a relation which can only be conceived as taking place among fallen beings, tainted with a curse. It springs not from the nature of man as man, nor from the nature of society as such, but from the nature of man as sinful, and the nature of society as disordered.

Upon an earth radiant with the smile of heaven, or in the Paradise of God, we can no more picture the figure of a slave than we can picture the figures of the halt, the maimed, the lame and the blind; we can no more fancy the existence of masters and tasks than we can dream of hospitals and beggars. These are the badges of a fallen world. That it is inconsistent with a perfect state, that it is not absolutely a good, a blessing, the most strenuous defender of Slavery ought not to permit himself to deny; and the devout believer in Revelation would be mad to close his eyes to the fact, that the form in which it is first threatened in the Bible is as a punishment for crime. It is a natural evil which God has visited upon society, because man kept not his first estate, but fell, and, under the Gospel, is turned like all other natural evils into the means of an effective spiritual discipline. The Gospel does not propose to make our present state a *perfect* one—to make our earth a heaven. Here is where the philanthropists mistake. They picture to themselves imaginary models of a perfect Commonwealth; they judge of good and evil by the standard of such ideal schemes; they condemn whatever comes

short of their conceptions, without reference to the circumstances, which, after all, may make it relatively good. The sterility of the earth is, no doubt, in itself considered, an evil; but in its relations to man, who has lost his integrity, and to whom labour has become a burden, it is a needful stimulus of industry, and is so overruled into a blessing. The distinction of ranks in society, in the same way, is an evil; but in our fallen world, an absolute equality would be an absolute stagnation of all enterprise and industry. Good and evil, it should never be forgotten, are relative terms, and what may be good for one man may be an evil to another, or what is good at one time may be hurtful to the same individual at another. It can be affirmed of no form of government, and of no condition of society, that it is absolutely the best or the worst; and, in the inscrutable Providence of God, it is, no doubt, arranged that the circumstances of individuals, and the social and political institutions of communities, are, upon the whole, those which are best adapted to the degree of their moral progress. The free citizen of England and America could not endure the condition of African bondage; it would defeat his individual development. Neither could these nations endure the lifeless stagnation of Asiatic despotism. But the governments of Asia may be the only ones consistent with the moral development of their people, and subjection to a master, the state in which the African is most effectually trained to the moral end of his being. When we consider the diversities in moral position, which sin has been the means of entailing upon the race, we may be justified in affirming, that, relatively to some persons and to some times, Slavery may be a good, or, to speak more accurately, a condition, from which, though founded in a curse, the Providence of God extracts a blessing. We are not to judge of the institutions of the present by the standard of the future life; we are not to confound the absolute and relative. For aught that we know Slavery may stand in somewhat the same relation to political society, in a world like ours, in

which mortality stands to the human body; and it may be as vain to think of extirpating it, as to think of giving man immortality upon earth. It may be, and perhaps is, in some of its forms, essential to an imperfect society; and it may be, and perhaps is, the purpose of God that it should be found among men, as long as the slime of the serpent is over the earth. Admit, then, that Slavery is inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel, as that spirit is to find its full development in a state of glory, yet the conclusion by no means follows, that it is inconsistent with the spirit of the Gospel, as that spirit operates among rebels and sinners, in a degraded world, and under a dispensation of grace. The real question is, whether it is incompatible with the spiritual prosperity of individuals, or the general progress and education of society. It is clearly the office of the Gospel to train men, by virtue of the discipline of temptation, hardship and evil, for a state of perfection and glory. Nothing is inconsistent with it which does not present obstacles to the practice of duty, which its own grace is inadequate to surmount. Whoever, therefore, would maintain that Slavery is incompatible with the present relations of the Gospel to man, must maintain that it precludes him, by its very nature, from the discharge of some of the duties which the Gospel enjoins. It is nothing to the purpose to speak of it generally and vaguely as an evil; it must be shown to be an evil of that specific kind which necessitates the commission of sin, and the neglect of duty. Neither is it sufficient to say that it presents strong temptations to sin, in the violent motives which a master may press upon a slave to execute unlawful commands. This can be affirmed of numberless other situations, in which none will contend that it is unlawful to be found. The question is, not whether it is the state most favourable to the offices of piety and virtue, but whether it is essentially incompatible with their exercise. This is the true issue.

The fundamental mistake of those who affirm Slavery to be essentially sinful is that the duties of all men are speci-

fically the same. Though they do not state the proposition in so many words, and in its naked form would probably dissent from it, yet a little attention to their reasoning puts it beyond doubt, that this is the radical assumption upon which they proceed—all men are bound to do specifically the same things. As there are obviously duties of some men, in some relations, which cannot be practised by a slave, they infer that the institution strips him of his rights, and curtails the fair proportions of his humanity. The argument, fully and legitimately carried out, would condemn every arrangement of society, which did not secure to all its members an absolute equality of position; it is the very spirit of socialism and communism.

The doctrine of the Bible, on the other hand, is that the specific duties—the things actually required to be done—are as various as the circumstances in which men are placed. Moral perfection does not depend upon the number or variety of single acts, but upon the general habitudes of the soul. He is upright whose temper of mind is in conformity with the law, and whose prevailing disposition would always prompt him, in all the relations of life, to do what is right. There may be many right things which he will never be required to perform, but he is entitled to the praise of excellence if he cultivates a spirit which would lead him to perform them, if circumstances should ever make them his duty. The heart may be in full and perfect sympathy with the whole spirit of the law, where the moral training has been confined to comparatively a narrow circle of actual duties. He may be full of benevolence who has never had the means or opportunity of bestowing costly alms upon the poor; he may cherish the gentleness of a lamb who has received no injuries to be forgiven, no wrongs to be forgotten; and he may possess the patience of a martyr, or the fortitude of a hero, whose virtue has never been tried by severe suffering or danger. The circumstances in which men are placed in this sublunary state are exceedingly diversified, but there is probably no external condition in which

the actual discipline to which men are subjected may not terminate in the temper of universal holiness. Some are tried in one way, some in another; some are required to do one set of things, some another; but the spirit of true obedience is universally the same, and the result of an effectual probation is, in every case, a moral sympathy with the moral perfections of God. The lesson is the same, however different the text-books from which it has been taught.

Now, unless Slavery is incompatible with the habitudes of holiness, unless it is inconsistent with the spirit of philanthropy or the spirit of piety, unless it furnishes no opportunities for obedience to the law, it is not inconsistent with the pursuit or attainment of the highest excellence. It is no abridgment of moral freedom; the slave may come from the probation of *his* circumstances as fully stamped with the image of God, as those who have enjoyed an easier lot—he may be as completely in unison with the spirit of universal rectitude, as if he had been trained on "flowery beds of ease." Let him discharge his *whole* duty in the actual circumstances of his case, and he is entitled to the praise of a perfect and an upright man. The question with God is, not *what* he has done, but *how:* man looketh at the outward circumstances, but God looketh at the heart.

Hence those moralists are grievously in error, who have represented Slavery as inconsistent with the full complement of human duty and as a consequent limitation upon the spiritual freedom of man, because there are duties which God has not connected with this condition of society. To maintain that the same things are universally obligatory, without regard to circumstances or relations, that what is exacted of one must necessarily be exacted from another, however different or even incongruous their outward states, is to confound the obligations of rulers and subjects, of parents and children, of guardians and wards, and to plunge the community into irretrievable confusion. All that can be affirmed is, that the same temper of universal rectitude is equally incumbent upon all, while it must be admitted

that the outward forms of its manifestations and expression must be determined by the relations which Providence has actually assigned to our state. The slave is to show his reverence for God, the freedom of his inward man, by a cheerful obedience to the lawful commands of his master; the master, his regard for one who is his Master in heaven by rendering to the slave that which is just and equal. The character of both is determined, in the sight of God, by the spirit which pervades their single acts, however the acts may differ in themselves.

If Slavery is not essentially incompatible with the discharge of the essential duties, as a spiritual service, it is not destructive of the essential rights, of humanity. All political organizations, our enemies themselves being judges, are subservient to the interests of the individual. "A human being," says Dr. Channing[1]—in a passage to which we have no other objection than that it represents the perfection of the individual as the ultimate end of his existence, while the Scripture represents it as a means to a higher and nobler end, the glory of God—"A human being is a member of the community, not as a limb is a member of the body, or as a wheel is a part of a machine, intended only to contribute to some general, joint result. He was created, not to be merged in the whole, as a drop in the ocean, or as a particle of sand on the sea-shore, and to aid only in composing a mass. He is an ultimate being, made for his own perfection as the highest end, made to maintain an individual existence, and to serve others only as far as consists with his own virtue and progress. Hitherto governments have tended greatly to obscure this importance of the individual, to depress him in his own eyes, to give him the idea of an outward interest more important than the invisible soul, and of an outward authority more sacred than the voice of God in his own secret conscience. Rulers have called the private man the property of the State, meaning generally by *the State* themselves, and thus the many have been im-

[1] Works, vol. ii., p. 77.

molated to the few, and have even believed that this was their highest destination. These views cannot be too earnestly withstood. Nothing seems to me so needful as to give to the mind the consciousness, which governments have done so much to suppress, of its own separate worth. Let the individual feel that through his immortality he may concentrate in his own being a greater good than that of nations. Let him feel that he is placed in the community, not to part with his individuality, or become a tool, but that he should find a sphere for his various powers, and a preparation for immortal glory. To me, the progress of society consists in nothing more than in bringing out the individual, in giving him a consciousness of his own being, and in quickening him to strengthen and elevate his own mind."

All this the grace of God, through the instrumentality of the Gospel, may accomplish in the person of one who is bound to labour under the direction and authority of another. The servant of men may be the freeman of the Lord. If his situation is compatible, as it confessedly is, with the achievement of the great end of his existence, if in the school of bondage he may be trained for the glorification and enjoyment of God, he is not divested of any of the rights which belong to him essentially *as man.* He may develop his moral and religious nature, the source and measure of all his rights, and must, consequently, retain every characteristic of essential humanity.

No proposition can be clearer than that the rights of man must be ultimately traced to his duties, and are nothing more than the obligations of his fellows to let him alone in the discharge of all the functions, and the enjoyment of all the blessings, of his lot. Whatever puts an obstruction or hinderance to the complement of his duties, is an encroachment upon the complement of his rights, as a *man.* Whatever is incompatible with the exercise of his moral nature is destructive of the fundamental law of his being. But as the moral discipline of man is consistent with the greatest variety of external condition, it is consistent with the great-

est variety of contingent rights—of rights which spring from peculiar circumstances and peculiar relations, and in the absence of which a man may still be a man. These cannot be treated as a fixed and invariable quantity. Dependent as they are upon our duties, which, in turn, are dependent upon our circumstances, they fluctuate with the gradations and progress of society, being wider or narrower according to the spheres in which we move. It is only by postulating duties for the slave which God has not enjoined on him, that any show of decency can be given to the declamations against the "robbery and fraud" which have incapacitated him to perform them. The slave has rights, all the rights which belong essentially to humanity, and without which his nature could not be human, or his conduct susceptible of praise or blame. In the enjoyment of these rights religion demands that he should be protected.

But then there are rights which belong to men in other situations, to which he is by no means entitled—the rights of the citizen, for example, and the free member of the Commonwealth. They are not his, for the simple reason that they are not essential, but contingent; they do not spring from humanity simply considered, for then they would belong to women and children, but from humanity in such and such relations.

As to the influence of Slavery upon the advancement of society, there can be no doubt, if the government of God be moral, that the true progress of communities and States, as well as the highest interests of individuals, depends upon the fidelity with which the duties are discharged in every condition of life. It is the great law of providential education, that "to every one that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." In this way the reign of universal justice is promoted, and wherever that obtains, the development of the individual, which is the great end of all social and political institutions, must infallibly take place. The prosperity of the State at the same

time is secured, and secured, too, without the necessity of sudden changes or violent revolutions. It will be like the vigour of a healthful body, in which all the limbs and organs perform their appropriate functions without collision or tumult, and its ascension to a high degree of moral elevation will be like the growth of such a body, silent and imperceptible, the natural result of the blessing of God upon the means He has appointed. Let masters and servants, each in their respective spheres, be impregnated with the principle of duty—let masters resolve to render unto their servants that which is just and equal, never transcending the legitimate bounds of their authority, and servants resolve to cherish sentiments of reverence for their masters according to the flesh, never falling short of the legitimate claims on their obedience, and the chief good of each, as individuals and as men, will be most surely promoted, while each will contribute an important share to the strength and stability of the Commonwealth. The feet are as indispensable to the head as the head to the feet. The social fabric is made up of divers ingredients, and the cement which binds them together in durability and unity is the cement of justice.

Beside the arguments drawn from considerations of justice and the essential rights of humanity, the incompatibility of Slavery with the spirit and temper of the Gospel is not unfrequently attempted to be made out from the injunction of the Saviour to love our neighbour as ourselves, and to do unto others as we would have them to do unto us. The principle, however, upon which the precept of universal benevolence is interpreted in this case makes it the sanction of the grossest wickedness. If we are to regulate our conduct to others by the arbitrary expectations which, in their circumstances, our passions and selfishness might prompt us to indulge, there ceases to be any other standard of morality than caprice. The humour of every man becomes law. The judge could not condemn the criminal, nor the

executioner behead him; the rich man could not claim his possessions, nor the poor learn patience from their sufferings. If I am bound to emancipate my slave because, if the tables were turned and our situations reversed, I should covet this boon from him, I should be bound, upon the same principle, to promote my indigent neighbours around me to an absolute equality with myself. That neither the Jews, in whose law the precept was first formally announced, nor the Apostles to whom it was more fully expounded by the Saviour, ever applied it in the sense of the Abolitionists is a strong presumption against their mode of interpretation. The truth is, the precept is simply the inculcation of *justice* from motives of love. Our Saviour directs us to do unto others what, in their situations, it would be right and reasonable in us to expect from them. We are to put ourselves in their situations, that we may duly weigh the circumstances of their case, and so be prepared to apply to it the principles of universal justice. We are to let no motives of indolence, ease or apathy prevent us from considering their condition. We are to take the same interest in them that we would take in ourselves, and are to extend to them the same protection of the Divine law which we would insist upon for ourselves. The rule then simply requires, in the case of Slavery, that we should treat our slaves as we should feel that we had a right to be treated if we were slaves ourselves; it is only enforcing by benevolence the apostolic injunction, Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal. Do right, in other words, as you would claim right.

The instances which are usually urged to prove that Slavery is inconsistent with the rights of man, unfortunately for the argument, are not peculiar to Slavery. They are incidents of poverty, wherever it prevails in a distressing form; and a wise system of legislation could much more easily detach them from the system of Slavery than from the deep indigence which is sure to crush the labourer where a crowded population obtains. They are, at best, only abuses

in the one case which might be corrected, while in the other they seem to be inseparable elements.

Enough has been said to show that Slavery is not repugnant to the spirit of the Gospel, in its present relations to our race. It is one of the conditions in which God is conducting the moral probation of man—a condition not incompatible with the highest moral freedom, the true glory of the race, and, therefore, not unfit for the moral and spiritual discipline which Christianity has instituted. It is one of the schools in which immortal spirits are trained for their final destiny. If it is attended with severer hardships, these hardships are compensated by fewer duties, and the very violence of its temptations gives dignity and lustre to its virtues. The slave may be fitted, in his humble and, if you please, degraded lot, for shining as a star in the firmament of heaven. In his narrow sphere, he may be cherishing and cultivating a spirit which shall render him meet for the society of angels and the everlasting enjoyment of God. The Christian beholds in him, not a tool, not a chattel, not a brute or thing, but an immortal spirit, assigned to a particular position in this world of wretchedness and sin, in which he is required to work out the destiny which attaches to him, in common with his fellows, as a man. He is an actor on the broad theatre of life; and as true merit depends not so much upon the part which is assigned, as upon the propriety and dignity with which it is sustained, so fidelity in this relation may hereafter be as conspicuously rewarded as fidelity in more exalted stations. Angels and God look not upon the outward state of man: the poverty, rags and wretchedness of one, the robes, diadems and crowns of another, are nothing. True worth is the moral vesture of the soul. The spirit of obedience, the love of holiness, sympathy with God—these are the things which make men beautiful and glorious. This is true freedom; these are the things which shall endure and flourish with increasing lustre, when Thrones have crumbled in the dust and Republics mouldered among the ruins of the past.

The important question among us is that which relates to the discharge of our own duties as masters—What are the things which are just and equal that we are required to render to our slaves?

But before attending to this inquiry, it may be well to notice the popular argument against Slavery drawn from the fact, that, as it must have begun in the perpetration of grievous wrong, no lapse of time can make it subsequently right —prescription can never sanctify injustice. The answer turns upon the distinction between the wrong itself and the effects of the wrong. The criminal act, whatever it may have been, by which a man was reduced to the condition of bondage, can never cease to be otherwise than criminal, but the relations to which that act gave rise may, themselves, be consistent with the will of God, and the foundation of new and important duties. The relations of a man to his natural offspring, though wickedly formed, give rise to duties which would be ill-discharged by the destruction of the child. No doubt the principle upon which Slavery has been most largely engrafted into society as an integral element of its complex constitution—the principle, that captivity in war gives a right to the life of a prisoner for which his bondage is accepted in exchange, is not consistent with the truth of the case. But it was recognized as true for ages and generations; it was a step in the moral development of nations, and has laid the foundation of institutions and usages, which cannot now be disturbed with impunity, and in regard to which our conduct must be regulated by the fact of their existence, and not by speculation upon the morality of their origin. Our world exhibits everywhere the traces of sin; and if we tolerate nothing but what we may expect to find in a state of perfection and holiness, we must leave this scene of sublunary distraction. The education of States is a slow process. Their standards of rectitude slowly approximate the standard of God, and in their ages of infancy, ignorance and blindness, they establish many institutions upon false maxims, which cannot subsequently be extirpated

without abandoning the whole of the real progress they have made, and reconstituting society afresh. These things, moreover, take place under the sleepless Providence of God, who is surely accomplishing His own great purposes, and who makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and restrains at pleasure the remainder of wrath.

In treating Slavery as an existing institution, a fact involving most important moral relations, one of the prime duties of the State is to protect, by temporal legislation, the real rights of the slave. The moral sense of the country acknowledges them; the religion of the country to a large extent ensures their observance; but until they are defined by law and enforced by penalties there is no adequate protection of them. They are in the category of imperfect and not of perfect rights. The effect of legal protection would be to counteract whatever tendencies Slavery may be supposed to possess to produce servility and abjectness of mind. It would inspire a sense of personal responsibility, a certain degree of manliness and dignity of character, which would be at once a security to the master and an immense blessing to the slave. The meanness, cunning, hypocrisy, lying and theft, which accompany a sense of degradation would give place to the opposite virtues, and there would be no foundation in our social relations for that slavery which Cicero defines—*obedientia fracti animi et abjecti, et arbitrio carentis suo.*

In the different systems of Slavery, taken collectively, all the essential rights of humanity have been recognized by law; showing that there is nothing in the relation itself inconsistent with this legal protection. The right to acquire knowledge, which is practically admitted by us though legally denied, was fully recognized by the Romans, whose slaves were often the teachers of their children and the scholars of the Commonwealth. The right of the family was formally protected among the Spaniards; and the right to personal safety is largely protected by ourselves. But, without stopping to inquire in what way temporal legisla-

tion may most effectually protect the rights of the slave, we hesitate not to affirm, that one of the highest and most solemn obligations which rest upon the masters of the South is to give to their servants, to the utmost extent of their ability, free access to the instructions and institutions of the Gospel. The injustice of denying to them food and raiment and shelter, against which the law effectually guards, is nothing to the injustice of defrauding them of that bread which cometh down from heaven. Their labour is ours. From infancy to age, they attend on us—they greet our introduction into the world with smiles of joy, and lament our departure with a heartfelt sorrow; and every motive of humanity and religion exacts from us, that we should remunerate their services by putting within their reach the means of securing a blessed immortality. The meanest slave has in him a soul of priceless value. "No earthly or celestial language can exaggerate its worth. Thought, reason, conscience, the capacity of virtue, the capacity of Christian love, an immortal destiny, an intimate moral connection with God—here are attributes of our common humanity which reduce to insignificance all outward distinctions, and make every human being" a sublime, an awful object. That soul has sinned; it is under the curse of the Almighty, and nothing can save it from an intolerable hell but the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. They must hear this joyful sound or perish. For "how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?" Our design in giving them the Gospel is not to civilize them, not to change their social condition, not to exalt them into citizens or freemen; it is to save them. The Church contemplates them only as sinners, and she is straitened to declare unto them the unsearchable riches of Christ. She sees them as the poor of the land, under the lawful dominion of their masters; and she says to these masters, in the name and by the authority of God, Give them what justice, benevolence, humanity

would demand even for a stranger, an enemy, a persecutor—give them the Gospel, without which life will be a curse. Sweeten their toil, sanctify their lives, hallow their deaths. The solemnities of this night are a proof that the call has not been wholly disregarded among us. We have begun a good work, and God grant that it may never cease until every slave in the land is brought under the tuition of Jesus of Nazareth! None need be afraid of His lessons. It was said of Him on earth, that He should not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets. He was no stirrer up of strife, no mover of sedition. His "religion on the other hand is the pillar of society, the safeguard of nations, the parent of social order, which alone has power to curb the fury of the passions, and secure to every one his rights; to the laborious the reward of their industry; to the rich the enjoyment of their wealth; to nobles the preservation of their honours; and to princes the stability of their thrones." Insurrection, anarchy and bloodshed, revolt against masters, or treason against States, were never learned in the school of Him, whose Apostles enjoined subjection to the magistrate, and obedience to all lawful authority, as characteristic duties of the faithful. Is anything to be apprehended from the instructions of Him in whose text-book it is recorded: "Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their masters worthy of all honour"? Christian knowledge inculcates contentment with our lot; and, in bringing before us the tremendous realities of eternity, renders us comparatively indifferent to the inconveniences and hardships of time. It subdues those passions and prejudices from which all real danger to the social economy springs. "Some have objected," says a splendid writer,[1] "to the instruction of the lower classes from an apprehension that it would lift them above their sphere, make them dissatisfied with their station in life, and, by impairing the habits of subordination, endanger

[1] Robert Hall. Advantages of Knowledge to the Lower Classes. Works, vol. i., p. 202.

the tranquillity of the State; an objection devoid surely of all force and validity. It is not easy to conceive in what manner instructing men in their duties can prompt them to neglect those duties, or how that enlargement of reason which enables them to comprehend the true grounds of authority, and the obligation to obedience, should indispose them to obey. The admirable mechanism of society, together with that subordination of ranks which is essential to its subsistence, is surely not an elaborate imposture, which the exercise of reason will detect and expose. The objection we have stated implies a reflection on the social order equally impolitic, invidious and unjust. Nothing in reality renders legitimate governments so insecure as extreme ignorance in the people. It is this which yields them an easy prey to seduction, makes them the victims of prejudice and false alarms, and so ferocious withal, that their interference in a time of public commotion is more to be dreaded than the eruption of a volcano."

Our highest security in these States lies in the confidence and affection of our servants, and nothing will more effectually propitiate their regards than consistent efforts, upon our part, to promote their everlasting good. They will feel that those are not tyrants who are striving to bring them unto God; and they will be slow to cast off a system which has become associated in their minds with their dearest hopes and most precious consolations. Brutal ignorance is indeed to be dreaded; the only security against it is physical force; it is the parent of ferocity, of rashness, and of desperate enterprises. But Christian knowledge softens and subdues. Christ Jesus, in binding His subjects to God, binds them more closely to each other in the ties of confidence, fidelity and love. We would say, then, to you and to all our brethren of the South, Go on in your present undertaking; and though our common enemies may continue to revile, you will be consolidating the elements of your social fabric so firmly and compactly that it shall defy the storms of fanaticism, while the spectacle you will

exhibit of union, sympathy and confidence among the different orders of the community, will be a standing refutation of all their accusations against us. Go on in this noble enterprise, until every slave in our borders shall know of Jesus and the resurrection; and the blessing of God will attend you, and turn back the tide of indignation which the public opinion of the world is endeavouring to roll upon you. Go on in this career, and afford another illustration of what all experience has demonstrated—that Christianity is the cheap defence of every institution which contributes to the progress of man.

THE

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

PREFATORY NOTE.

UNDER the head of "The Southern Presbyterian Church" three pieces are here given:

1. Reasons for the separate organization of the Southern Presbyterian Church, now denominated *The Presbyterian Church in the United States.* These were embodied in a Report submitted to the Synod of South Carolina at its sessions at Abbeville, November, 1861, in regard to its relation to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. The paper was unanimously adopted by the Synod.

2. An Address of the "General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate [now United] States" to all the Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the earth. This paper was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly of that Church at its first organization in the city of Augusta, Georgia, in December, 1861.

3. A Valedictory Letter to the "General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America," which Dr. Thornwell wrote with a view to submitting it to the first General Assembly of the Southern Church. It was never read, however, to the body. The "Spring resolutions" were understood by the Presbyterians of the South as *forcing them out* of the Church, and several of the most venerable and influential members of the Augusta Assembly insisted that any such Letter would be construed not as a mere courteous Farewell, but as an unbecoming *apology* for our departure. Dr. Thornwell, acknowledging the injustice of the Philadelphia Assembly towards Southern Presbyterians, and the infatuation of the act by which it compelled them to choose between allegiance to their Confederacy and allegiance to their Church, professed eloquently that he had no "resentments," and that he earnestly desired our Church to show that it had come "calmly and dispassionately, in the spirit of peace and charity, to its present position." "The brethren of the Church at the North had erred, but they were men, and to err belongs to man. It did not become us to scorn one another. It behoves this body to show to the world that it has not been influenced by low passions or undue anger." Such were no doubt the sentiments of very many of the Augusta Assembly, but as it was apparent that the proposition for a Farewell Letter could not be passed with entire unanimity, it was withdrawn.

REASONS FOR SEPARATE ORGANIZATION.

THE Committee, to whom was referred the subject of the relations of this Synod to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, beg leave to report, that these relations have, in fact, been already dissolved by the Presbyteries which compose this body. They have solemnly and formally renounced its jurisdiction. It has become a foreign Church to them, and they are foreign courts to it. They have gone further, and have taken steps to constitute a new General Assembly, with the view of giving to the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States as complete an organization as it had in the United States of America. Their design is that the Churches of the two countries shall be as independent of each other as their governments, and that each, without let or hinderance from the other, shall undertake to execute all the functions which the Saviour has committed to His body. All that remains for this Synod to do is to ratify, as a whole, what has already been done by its constituent parts.

There are two reasons which justify the Presbyteries of the Confederate States in forming a new and an independent Assembly. The first is, that the old Assembly has transcended its jurisdiction by authoritatively settling a political question.[1] It has undertaken, as a court of Jesus Christ, acting in His name and under His commission, to determine the lawful government of these Confederate States.

[1] Reference is had here to the adoption of what are known as the "Spring resolutions," in which the Assembly declared the obligation of the Church to support the Federal government at Washington, and professed the Church's loyalty to the Constitution of the United States.—EDITORS.

It has not only directed us to render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, but it has assumed the right to adjudicate betwixt the claims of rival Cæsars, and to say which is entitled to allegiance. This Synod is clear that the provinces of Church and State are entirely distinct, and that the Church as much transcends its sphere in pronouncing upon questions political, as the State transcends its sphere in dealing with matters ecclesiastical. The Church, it is true, is to declare and enforce revealed Truth, and, among other duties, she is to enjoin obedience to the powers that be. But when the question arises, who and what those powers are, and how far obedience must be carried, the Church must remit the answer to the civil tribunals of the land, and to the dictates of the individual conscience. She has no commission from her Lord to declare what form of government any people shall adopt, how long they shall continue to maintain it, or under what circumstances they shall change it. Her members, as citizens, may and should take an active part in all discussions of the kind, but her courts, as authoritative tribunals of Christ, must be as silent as their Master. General principles she may and must announce—the eternal principles of the moral law; but their concrete application to political constitutions and political changes does not fall within the limits of her power.

Still, though the old Assembly has transcended its jurisdiction, we do not hold that this, in itself considered, is an adequate ground for separation. Under other circumstances the act might be quietly annulled, or deliberately disobeyed, without disturbing our organic relations to the body. But the present case is one of peculiar aggravation. The act is not only unconstitutional, but it puts the parties in a relation to each other which renders it hopelessly impossible that they can co-operate as members of the same communion, with any prospect of success. It has transferred to the Church all the bitterness of the political feud. An Assembly composed of members, one half of whom believe that the other half ought to be hanged, denouncing each

other, on the one hand, as *rebels* and *traitors*, and, on the other, as *tyrants* and *oppressors*, would be anything but an edifying spectacle. Nothing but strife and confusion could be expected to result from so unnatural an union. To talk of promoting the glory of God, and of building up the kingdom of the Redeemer, under such circumstances, would be simply absurd. In order, therefore, to save the Church from scandal, to promote its harmony and peace, and to secure cordial co-operation in carrying out its evangelical schemes, it seems to this Synod to be absolutely necessary that the North and the South should separate. As distinct organizations, their rivalry in holy zeal may give a new impetus to the labours of both; as *one body*, their national animosities would drive the Spirit from their halls.

But, apart from this consideration, we hold that it is wise and proper that church-organizations should be determined by national lines. There is a wide difference betwixt schism and separation. Schism always implies a breach of charity; it breaks the bond, not of external, but of internal, union, and is generally grounded in error of doctrine, irregularity of government, or rebellion against lawful discipline. Churches, however, may be distinct and separate, and yet perfectly at one in every principle of faith and order. The advantages are so obvious of having a complete and independent Church in every Christian nation, that the plan has been universally adopted in the States of Christendom. On this plan the Church can act with more concert and with more freedom. It is less likely to excite the jealousy and suspicion of the State; it can be more homogeneous, more compact, and consequently more energetic. It is a providential arrangement by which the Church catholic realizes the benefits of a division of labour. In our own case, there is a special reason why we should have the supreme control of our ecclesiastical matters in our own hands. We have a field which none can enter, much less cultivate, but ourselves. On these grounds, we think that it would have been our duty, independently of

any divisive measures of the old Assembly, to set up for ourselves; and this Synod would have been prepared, in perfect charity with the brethren of the North, to have taken steps, upon the permanent establishment of the Confederate Government, to institute a separate and independent Assembly in the Confederate States. For these reasons, the Synod cordially approves of the course of its Presbyteries in declaring themselves independent of the old Assembly. The Synod further approves of the measures they have adopted for the organization of a new Assembly, on the fourth day of December next, at Augusta.

As that will be a most important meeting, destined to shape very largely the future history of the Church in these Confederate States, the Synod thinks it due to the interests involved to declare some of the principles which should enter into the new organization.

1. In the first place, some safe provision should be made for changes in the Constitution of the Church. The extremes of party innovation, and of no innovation at all, should be equally guarded against. A Protestant Church, with an unchangeable creed, is an anomaly. Its very name is a confession of its liability to err; and that no provision should be made for correcting its errors seems not a little extravagant. In the old Assembly, it was always a disputed point whether we could modify, in the slightest degree, our doctrinal Standards, and the plan of adding new constitutional rules was awkward and inefficient. We say this, not because we desire to make any changes in our creed. The Westminster Confession and Catechisms we cordially receive as the mind of the Spirit. We believe them to be faithful expositions of the Word of God. The great system which they teach never can be altered by those who love the Truth; but there are incidental statements, not affecting the plan of salvation and the doctrines of grace, about which our children may not be as well satisfied as ourselves. Our Form of Government has some obscurities which ought to be removed, and might possibly be improved

by a few additions. Our Book of Discipline and our Directory for Worship evidently need revision; at least they ought not to be made like the laws of the Medes and Persians. What we insist on is, that our Standards should not be rendered absolutely unalterable, and that the method of alteration should be simple and intelligible. Many may think that the present Constitution provides for the case; others think differently. We would have the matter put beyond dispute. In re-adopting the Constitution, as a General Assembly, it might be well to pass an act, to be submitted to the Presbyteries, and confirmed or rejected by them, that hereafter no changes should be made in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms without being proposed by three-fourths of one Assembly, and ratified by three-fourths of two succeeding Assemblies; and that no changes should be made in our Form of Government and other books without being proposed by three-fourths of one Assembly, and ratified by three-fourths of the next. Something of this kind would be equally a check upon rash innovation and absolute immutability.

2. In the next place, this Synod respectfully suggests that, in constituting its permanent schemes for prosecuting the proper work of the Church, the new Assembly should aim at the two ends of simplicity of structure and directness of responsibility. Whether the new organizations are to be called *Boards* or *Committees* (we care nothing about a name), let them be composed only of those who are expected to do the work, in such a number as will be most likely to secure efficiency, and let them be immediately appointed by the Assembly and immediately responsible to it. We would have no complimentary distinctions, and no breakwater betwixt the Assembly and its own servants. Let the Assembly itself occupy the place of the old Boards, and the Executive Committees be its creatures.

3. In the third place, in adjusting the scheme of Domestic Missions, this Synod is persuaded that the functions of the new Committee should be restricted to the dispensing

of aid to feeble Presbyteries, and to the planting and training of churches in frontier and destitute settlements. Within its own limits, each Presbytery is bound to cultivate the field. When a Presbytery is weak it has a right to claim assistance from its richer brethren, and the Committee of Missions should be the organ of correspondence between them. All should combine their energies to extend the borders of the Church, and the Committee should be the agent to execute their pious purpose. Nothing should be done to lessen in the Presbyteries their sense of presbyterial responsibility. They should be made to feel that it is *their* duty to go up and occupy their own territory.

4. In the fourth place, if the Assembly should establish any Committee of Education—of the expediency of which we are not satisfied—we are clear that its office should be exclusively confined to the aiding of indigent candidates for the Gospel ministry. It should have no power to determine their places of education, nor the extent and period of their studies. Whatever views the Southern Church may entertain as to the relations of the Church to the general subject of education, and whatever arrangements may be made for fulfilling its wishes in this respect, we sincerely hope that the Committee in question may not be charged with this wide department of benevolence.

As the appointment of a Committee or Board of Publication is not likely, in the present circumstances of the country, to be attempted, it is not necessary to say anything in relation to the expediency of the measure. Whatever schemes the Assembly may adopt, we hope that they will be widely scattered, and that no two of them will be established in the same city or in the same State.

These hints, and they are only hints, the Synod feels that it becomes it to make. We are deeply interested in the prosperity and success of the Confederate Church. If our suggestions are worthy of consideration, we are sure that they will receive it; if not, we shall not complain of their rejection by our brethren. We earnestly pray that God's Spirit

may preside at the new organization, that He may order everything according to His own holy will, and that He may dwell for ever in the new Church, which is hereafter to take its place among the Churches of our common Lord in the other nations of the earth.

The Synod, it may be added, cordially approves of the arrangements proposed by the Atlanta Convention for facilitating the organization of the Assembly, and hereby expresses the hope that Doctors Gray and Waddell will consent to act as a Committee of Commissions, and that Dr. Palmer will preach the opening sermon.

It may be well also to say that, in our judgment, the temporary scheme adopted by the brethren at Columbia, for keeping alive the interest of the Southern Church in Foreign Missions, was wise and timely, and we hail it as an auspicious providence that Dr. Wilson[1] was sent to his native soil at so critical a juncture.

This Synod, indeed, cannot but regard it as a significant circumstance that the Southern Church, before she was yet ready to become independent, or had taken any steps to complete her organization, had a large number of missionary stations thrown upon her care, and a channel prepared through which her liberality could be conveyed to them. It was a providential intimation that her future career should be distinguished by pre-eminent zeal, fidelity, and energy in this department of labour. The cloudy pillar has gone before her. At her very birth she has been baptized with the spirit of Missions.

Finally, in approving of the measures which have dissolved the connection of this Synod with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and made it a party to a new organization, we are not to be understood as renouncing the old Constitution. On the contrary, we still cordially adopt it, and firmly adhere to it as the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America.

[1] The Rev. John Leighton Wilson, D.D.

ADDRESS TO ALL CHURCHES OF CHRIST.

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America to all the Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the earth, greeting: Grace, mercy and peace be multiplied upon you!

Dearly Beloved Brethren:

It is probably known to you that the Presbyteries and Synods in the Confederate States, which were formerly in connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, have renounced the jurisdiction of that body, and dissolved the ties which bound them ecclesiastically with their brethren of the North. This act of separation left them without any formal union among themselves. But as they were one in faith and order, and still adhered to their old Standards, measures were promptly adopted for giving expression to their unity by the organization of a Supreme Court, upon the model of the one whose authority they had just relinquished. Commissioners, duly appointed, from all the Presbyteries of these Confederate States, met, accordingly, in the city of Augusta, on the fourth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-one, and then and there proceeded to constitute the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States—that is to say, the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Government, the Book of Discipline, and the Directory for Worship—was unanimously and solemnly declared to be the

Constitution of the Church in the Confederate States, with no other change than the substitution of Confederate for United wherever the country is mentioned in the Standards. The Church, therefore, in these seceded States presents now the spectacle of a separate, independent and complete organization, under the style and title of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. In thus taking its place among sister Churches of this and other countries, it seems proper that it should set forth the causes which have impelled it to separate from the Church of the North, and to indicate a general view of the course which it feels it incumbent upon it to pursue in the new circumstances in which it is placed.

We should be sorry to be regarded by our brethren in any part of the world as guilty of schism. We are not conscious of any purpose to rend the body of Christ. On the contrary, our aim has been to promote the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. If we know our own hearts, and can form any just estimate of the motives which have governed us, we have been prompted by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God, and the efficiency, energy, harmony and zeal of His visible kingdom in the earth. We have separated from our brethren of the North as Abraham separated from Lot, because we are persuaded that the interests of true religion will be more effectually subserved by two independent Churches, under the circumstances in which the two countries are placed, than by one united body.

1. In the first place, the course of the last Assembly, at Philadelphia, conclusively shows, that if we should remain together, the political questions which divide us as citizens will be obtruded on our church-courts, and discussed by Christian Ministers and Elders with all the acrimony, bitterness and rancour with which such questions are usually discussed by men of the world. Our Assembly would present a mournful spectacle of strife and debate. Commissioners from the Northern would meet with Commissioners from the Southern Confederacy, to wrangle over the ques-

tions which have split them into two Confederacies, and involved them in a furious and bloody war. They would denounce each other on the one hand as *tyrants* and *oppressors*, and on the other as *traitors* and *rebels*. The Spirit of God would take His departure from these scenes of confusion, and leave the Church lifeless and powerless, an easy prey to the sectional divisions and angry passions of its members. Two nations, under any circumstances except those of perfect homogeneousness, cannot be united in one Church, without the rigid exclusion of all civil and secular questions from its halls. Where the countries differ in their customs and institutions, and view each other with an eye of jealousy and rivalry, if national feelings are permitted to enter the church-courts, there must be an end of harmony and peace. The prejudices of the man and the citizen will prove stronger than the charity of the Christian. When they have allowed themselves to denounce each other for their national peculiarities, it will be hard to join in cordial fellowship as members of the same spiritual family. Much more must this be the case where the nations are not simply rivals, but enemies; when they hate each other with a cruel hatred; when they are engaged in a ferocious and bloody war, and when the worst passions of human nature are stirred to their very depths. An Assembly composed of representatives from two such countries could have no security for peace except in a steady, uncompromising adherence to the scriptural principle, that it would know no man after the flesh; that it would abolish the distinctions of Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, and recognize nothing but the new creature in Christ Jesus. The moment it permits itself to know the Confederate or the United States, the moment its members meet as citizens of these countries, our political differences will be transferred to the house of God, and the passions of the forum will expel the Spirit of holy love and of Christian communion. We cannot condemn a man in one breath as unfaithful to the most solemn earthly interests, his country and his race, and com-

mend him in the next as a loyal and faithful servant of his God. If we distrust his patriotism, our confidence in his piety is apt to be very measured. The old adage will hold here as in other things, *falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus.*

The only conceivable condition, therefore, upon which the Church of the North and the South could remain together as one body, with any prospect of success, is the rigorous exclusion of the questions and passions of the forum from its halls of debate. This is what ought always to be done. The provinces of Church and State are perfectly distinct, and the one has no right to usurp the jurisdiction of the other. The State is a natural institute, founded in the constitution of man as moral and social, and designed to realize the idea of justice. It is the society of rights. The Church is a supernatural institute, founded in the facts of redemption, and is designed to realize the idea of grace. It is the society of the redeemed. The State aims at social order; the Church at spiritual holiness. The State looks to the visible and outward; the Church is concerned for the invisible and inward. The badge of the State's authority is the sword, by which it becomes a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well. The badge of the Church's authority is the keys, by which it opens and shuts the kingdom of Heaven, according as men are believing or impenitent. The power of the Church is exclusively spiritual; that of the State includes the exercise of force. The Constitution of the Church is a Divine revelation; the Constitution of the State must be determined by human reason and the course of providential events. The Church has no right to construct or modify a government for the State, and the State has no right to frame a creed or polity for the Church. They are as planets moving in different orbits, and unless each is confined to its own track, the consequences may be as disastrous in the moral world as the collision of different spheres in the world of matter. It is true that there is a point at which their respective jurisdictions seem to meet—in the idea of duty.

But even duty is viewed by each in very different lights. The Church enjoins it as obedience to God, and the State enforces it as the safeguard of order. But there can be no collision, unless one or the other blunders as to the things that are materially right. When the State makes wicked laws, contradicting the eternal principles of rectitude, the Church is at liberty to testify against them and humbly to petition that they may be repealed. In like manner, if the Church becomes seditious and a disturber of the peace, the State has a right to abate the nuisance. In ordinary cases, however, there is not likely to be a collision. Among a Christian people, there is little difference of opinion as to the radical distinctions of right and wrong. The only serious danger is where moral duty is conditioned upon a political question. Under the pretext of inculcating duty, the Church may usurp the power to determine the question which conditions it, and that is precisely what she is debarred from doing. The condition must be *given*. She must accept it from the State, and then her own course is clear. If Cæsar is your master, then pay tribute to him; but whether the *if* holds, whether Cæsar is your master or not, whether he ever had any just authority, whether he now retains it, or has forfeited it—these are points which the Church has no commission to adjudicate.

Had these principles been steadily maintained by the Assembly at Philadelphia, it is possible that the ecclesiastical separation of the North and the South might have been deferred for years to come. Our Presbyteries, many of them, clung with tenderness to the recollections of the past. Sacred memories gathered around that venerable Church which had breasted many a storm and trained our fathers for glory. It had always been distinguished for its conservative influence, and many fondly hoped that, even in the present emergency, it would raise its placid and serene head above the tumults of popular passion, and bid defiance to the angry billows which rolled at its feet. We expected it to bow in reverence only at the name of Jesus. Many

dreamed that it would utterly refuse to know either Confederates or Federalists, and utterly refuse to give any authoritative decree without a "thus saith the Lord." It was ardently desired that the sublime spectacle might be presented of one Church upon earth combining in cordial fellowship and in holy love the disciples of Jesus in different and even in hostile lands. But, alas! for the weakness of man, these golden visions were soon dispelled. The first thing which roused our Presbyteries to look the question of separation seriously in the face was the course of the Assembly in venturing to determine, as a court of Jesus Christ —which it did by necessary implication—the true interpretation of the Constitution of the United States as to the kind of government it intended to form. A political theory was, to all intents and purposes, propounded, which made secession a crime, the seceding States rebellious, and the citizens who obeyed them traitors. We say nothing here as to the righteousness or unrighteousness of these decrees. What we maintain is, that, whether right or wrong, the Church had no right to make them—she transcended her sphere, and usurped the duties of the State. The discussion of these questions, we are sorry to add, was in the spirit and temper of partisan declaimers. The Assembly, driven from its ancient moorings, was tossed to and fro by the waves of popular passion. Like Pilate, it obeyed the clamour of the multitude, and, though acting in the name of Jesus, it kissed the sceptre and bowed the knee to the mandates of Northern phrenzy. The Church was converted into the forum, and the Assembly was henceforward to become the arena of sectional divisions and national animosities.

We frankly admit that the mere unconstitutionality of the proceedings of the last Assembly is not, in itself considered, a sufficient ground of separation. It is the consequences of these proceedings which make them so offensive. It is the door which they open for the introduction of the worst passions of human nature into the deliberations of

church-courts. The spirit of these proceedings, if allowed to prevail, would forever banish peace from the Church, and there is no reason to hope that the tide which has begun to flow can soon be arrested. The two Confederacies hate each other more intensely now than they did in May, and if their citizens should come together upon the same floor, whatever might be the errand that brought them there, they could not be restrained from smiting each other with the fist of wickedness. For the sake of peace, therefore, for Christian charity, for the honour of the Church, and for the glory of God, we have been constrained, as much as in us lies, to remove all occasion of offence. We have quietly separated, and we are grateful to God that while leaving for the sake of peace, we leave with the humble consciousness that we ourselves have never given occasion to break the peace. We have never confounded Cæsar and Christ, and we have never mixed the issues of this world with the weighty matters that properly belong to us as citizens of the kingdom of God.

2. Though the immediate occasion of separation was the course of the General Assembly at Philadelphia in relation to the Federal Government and the war, yet there is another ground on which the independent organization of the Southern Church can be amply and scripturally maintained. The unity of the Church does not require a formal bond of union among all the congregations of believers throughout the earth. It does not demand a vast imperial monarchy like that of Rome, nor a strictly universal council, like that to which the complete development of Presbyterianism would naturally give rise. The Church catholic is one in Christ, but it is not necessarily one visible, all-absorbing organization upon earth. There is no schism where there is no breach of charity. Churches may be perfectly at one in every principle of faith and order, and yet geographically distinct, and mutually independent. As the unity of the human race is not disturbed by its division into countries and nations, so the unity of the spiritual seed of Christ is

neither broken nor impaired by separation and division into various church-constitutions. Accordingly, in all Protestant countries, church-organizations have followed national lines. The Calvinistic Churches of Switzerland are distinct from the Reformed Church of France. The Presbyterians of Ireland belong to a different Church from the Presbyterians of Scotland. And the Presbyterians of this country constitute a Church, in like manner, distinct from all other Churches on the globe. That the division into national Churches—that is, Churches bounded by national lines—is, in the present condition of human nature, a benefit, seems to us too obvious for proof. It realizes to the Church catholic all the advantages of a division of labour. It makes a Church organization homogeneous and compact; it stimulates holy rivalry and zeal; it removes all grounds of suspicion and jealousy on the part of the State. What is lost in expansion is gained in energy. The Church catholic, as thus divided, and yet spiritually one—divided, but not rent—is a beautiful illustration of the great philosophical principle which pervades all nature—the co-existence of the one with the many.

If it is desirable that each nation should contain a separate and an independent Church, the Presbyteries of these Confederate States need no apology for bowing to the decree of Providence, which, in withdrawing their country from the Government of the United States, has, at the same time, determined that they should withdraw from the Church of their fathers. It is not that they have ceased to love it, not that they have abjured its ancient principles, or forgotten its glorious history. It is to give these same principles a richer, freer, fuller development among ourselves than they possibly could receive under foreign culture. It is precisely because we love that Church as it was, and that Church as it should be, that we have resolved, as far as in us lies, to realize its grand idea in the country, and under the Government, where God has cast our lot. With the supreme control of ecclesiastical affairs in our own hands, we may be

able, in some competent measure, to consummate this result. In subjection to a foreign power, we could no more accomplish it than the Church in the United States could have been developed in dependence upon the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The difficulty *there* would have been, not the distance of Edinburgh from New York, Philadelphia or Charleston, but the difference in the manners, habits, customs and ways of thinking, the social, civil and political institutions, of the people. These same difficulties exist in relation to the Confederate and United States, and render it eminently proper that the Church in each should be as separate and independent as the Governments.

In addition to this, there is one difference which so radically and fundamentally distinguishes the North and the South, that it is becoming every day more and more apparent that the religious, as well as the secular, interests of both will be more effectually promoted by a complete and lasting separation. The antagonism of Northern and Southern sentiment on the subject of Slavery lies at the root of all the difficulties which have resulted in the dismemberment of the Federal Union, and involved us in the horrors of an unnatural war. The Presbyterian Church in the United States has been enabled by the Divine grace to pursue, for the most part, an eminently conservative, because a thoroughly scriptural, policy in relation to this delicate question. It has planted itself upon the Word of God, and utterly refused to make slaveholding a sin, or non-slaveholding a term of communion. But though both Sections are agreed as to this general principle, it is not to be disguised that the North exercises a deep and settled antipathy to Slavery itself, while the South is equally zealous in its defence. Recent events can have no other effect than to confirm the antipathy on the one hand and strengthen the attachment on the other. The Northern section of the Church stands in the awkward predicament of maintaining, in one breath, that Slavery is an evil which ought to be abolished, and of asserting, in the next, that it is not a sin

to be visited by exclusion from the communion of the saints. The consequence is, that it plays partly into the hands of Abolitionists and partly into the hands of slaveholders, and weakens its influence with both. It occupies the position of a prevaricating witness whom neither party will trust. It would be better, therefore, for the moral power of the Northern section of the Church if it could get entirely quit of the subject. At the same time, it is intuitively obvious that the Southern section of the Church, while even partially under the control of those who are hostile to Slavery, can never have free and unimpeded access to the slave population. Its Ministers and Elders will always be liable to some degree of suspicion. In the present circumstances, Northern alliance would be absolutely fatal. It would utterly preclude the Church from a wide and commanding field of usefulness. This is too dear a price to be paid for a nominal union. We cannot afford to give up these millions of souls and consign them, so far as our efforts are concerned, to hopeless perdition, for the sake of preserving an outward unity which, after all, is an empty shadow. If we would gird ourselves heartily and in earnest for the work which God has set before us, we must have the control of our ecclesiastical affairs, and declare ourselves separate and independent.

And here we may venture to lay before the Christian world our views, as a Church, upon the subject of Slavery. We beg a candid hearing.

In the first place, we would have it distinctly understood that, in our ecclesiastical capacity, we are neither the friends nor the foes of Slavery—that is to say, we have no commission either to propagate or abolish it. The policy of its existence or non-existence is a question which exclusively belongs to the State. We have no right, as a Church, to enjoin it as a duty, or to condemn it as a sin. Our business is with the duties which spring from the relation—the duties of the masters on the one hand, and of their slaves on the other. These duties we are to proclaim, and to enforce with

spiritual sanctions. The social, civil, political problems connected with this great subject transcend our sphere, as God has not entrusted to His Church the organization of society, the construction of Governments, nor the allotment of individuals to their various stations. The Church has as much right to preach to the monarchies of Europe, and the despotisms of Asia, the doctrines of republican equality, as to preach to the Governments of the South the extirpation of Slavery. This position is impregnable, unless it can be shown that Slavery is a sin. Upon every other hypothesis, it is so clearly a question for the State, that the proposition would never for a moment have been doubted, had there not been a foregone conclusion in relation to its moral character. Is Slavery, then, a sin?

In answering this question, as a Church, let it be distinctly borne in mind that the only rule of judgment is the written Word of God. The Church knows nothing of the intuitions of reason or the deductions of philosophy, except those reproduced in the Sacred Canon. She has a positive Constitution in the Holy Scriptures, and has no right to utter a single syllable upon any subject, except as the Lord puts words in her mouth. She is founded, in other words, upon express *revelation*. Her creed is an authoritative testimony of God, and not a speculation; and what she proclaims, she must proclaim with the infallible certitude of faith, and not with the hesitating assent of an opinion. The question, then, is brought within a narrow compass: Do the Scriptures directly or indirectly condemn Slavery as a sin? If they do not, the dispute is ended, for the Church, without forfeiting her character, dares not go beyond them.

Now, we venture to assert that if men had drawn their conclusions upon this subject only from the Bible, it would no more have entered into any human head to denounce Slavery as a sin, than to denounce monarchy, aristocracy or poverty. The truth is, men have listened to what they falsely considered as primitive intuitions, or, as necessary deductions from primitive cognitions, and then have gone

to the Bible to confirm the crotchets of their vain philosophy. They have gone there determined to find a particular result, and the consequence is, that they leave with having *made*, instead of having *interpreted*, Scripture. Slavery is no new thing. It has not only existed for ages in the world, but it has existed under every dispensation of the covenant of grace in the Church of God. Indeed, the first organization of the Church as a visible society, separate and distinct from the unbelieving world, was inaugurated in the family of a slaveholder. Among the very first persons to whom the seal of circumcision was affixed were the slaves of the father of the faithful, some born in his house, and others bought with his money. Slavery again reappears under the Law. God sanctions it in the first table of the Decalogue, and Moses treats it as an institution to be regulated, not abolished; legitimated, not condemned. We come down to the age of the New Testament, and we find it again in the Churches founded by the Apostles under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Ghost. These facts are utterly amazing, if Slavery is the enormous sin which its enemies represent it to be. It will not do to say that the Scriptures have treated it only in a general, incidental way, without any clear implication as to its moral character. Moses surely made it the subject of express and positive legislation, and the Apostles are equally explicit in inculcating the duties which spring from both sides of the relation. They treat slaves as bound to obey, and inculcate obedience as an office of religion—a thing wholly self-contradictory, if the authority exercised over them were unlawful and iniquitous.

But what puts this subject in a still clearer light is the manner in which it is sought to extort from the Scriptures a contrary testimony. The notion of direct and explicit condemnation is given up. The attempt is to show that the genius and spirit of Christianity are opposed to it—that its great cardinal principles of virtue are utterly against it. Much stress is laid upon the Golden Rule and upon the

general denunciations of tyranny and oppression. To all this we reply, that no principle is clearer than that a case positively excepted cannot be included under a general rule. Let us concede, for a moment, that the law of love, and the condemnation of tyranny and oppression, seem logically to involve, as a result, the condemnation of Slavery; yet, if Slavery is afterwards expressly mentioned and treated as a lawful relation, it obviously follows, unless Scripture is to be interpreted as inconsistent with itself, that Slavery is, by necessary implication, excepted. The Jewish law forbade, as a general rule, the marriage of a man with his brother's wife. The same law expressly enjoined the same marriage in a given case. The given case was, therefore, an exception, and not to be treated as a violation of the general rule. The law of love has always been the law of God. It was enunciated by Moses almost as clearly as it was enunciated by Jesus Christ. Yet, notwithstanding this law, Moses and the Apostles alike sanctioned the relation of Slavery. The conclusion is inevitable, either that the law is not opposed to it, or that Slavery is an excepted case. To say that the prohibition of tyranny and oppression includes Slavery is to beg the whole question. Tyranny and oppression involve either the unjust usurpation or the unlawful exercise of power. It is the unlawfulness, either in its principle or measure, which constitutes the core of the sin. Slavery must, therefore, be proved to be unlawful, before it can be referred to any such category. The master may, indeed, abuse his power, but he oppresses not simply as a master, but as a wicked master.

But, apart from all this, the law of love is simply the inculcation of universal equity. It implies nothing as to the existence of various ranks and gradations in society. The interpretation which makes it repudiate Slavery would make it equally repudiate all social, civil and political inequalities. Its meaning is, not that we should conform ourselves to the arbitrary expectations of others, but that we should render unto them precisely the same measure which,

if we were in their circumstances, it would be reasonable and just in us to demand at their hands. It condemns Slavery, therefore, only upon the supposition that Slavery is a sinful relation—that is, he who extracts the prohibition of Slavery from the Golden Rule begs the very point in dispute.

We cannot prosecute the argument in detail, but we have said enough, we think, to vindicate the position of the Southern Church. We have assumed no new attitude. We stand exactly where the Church of God has always stood—from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to Christ, from Christ to the Reformers, and from the Reformers to ourselves. We stand upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone. Shall we be excluded from the fellowship of our brethren in other lands, because we dare not depart from the charter of our faith? Shall we be branded with the stigma of reproach, because we cannot consent to corrupt the Word of God to suit the intuitions of an infidel philosophy? Shall our names be cast out as evil, and the finger of scorn pointed at us, because we utterly refuse to break our communion with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with Moses, David and Isaiah, with Apostles, Prophets and Martyrs, with all the noble army of Confessors who have gone to glory from slave-holding countries and from a slave-holding Church, without ever having dreamed that they were living in mortal sin, by conniving at Slavery in the midst of them? If so, we shall take consolation in the cheering consciousness that the Master has accepted us. We may be denounced, despised and cast out of the synagogues of our brethren. But while they are wrangling about the distinctions of men according to the flesh, we shall go forward in our Divine work, and confidently anticipate, that, in the great day, as the consequence of our humble labours, we shall meet millions of glorified spirits, who have come up from the bondage of earth to a nobler freedom than human philosophy ever dreamed of. Others, if they please, may spend their time in declaiming on the tyranny of earthly masters; it

will be our aim to resist the real tyrants which oppress the soul—Sin and Satan. These are the foes against whom we shall find it employment enough to wage a successful war. And to this Holy War it is the purpose of our Church to devote itself with redoubled energy. We feel that the souls of our slaves are a solemn trust, and we shall strive to present them faultless and complete before the presence of God.

Indeed, as we contemplate their condition in the Southern States, and contrast it with that of their fathers before them, and that of their brethren in the present day in their native land, we cannot but accept it as a gracious Providence that they have been brought in such numbers to our shores, and redeemed from the bondage of barbarism and sin. Slavery to them has certainly been overruled for the greatest good. It has been a link in the wondrous chain of Providence, through which many sons and daughters have been made heirs of the heavenly inheritance. The providential result is, of course, no justification, if the thing is intrinsically wrong; but it is certainly a matter of devout thanksgiving, and no obscure intimation of the will and purpose of God, and of the consequent duty of the Church. We cannot forbear to say, however, that the general operation of the system is kindly and benevolent; it is a real and effective discipline, and without it we are profoundly persuaded that the African race in the midst of us can never be elevated in the scale of being. As long as that race, in its comparative degradation, co-exists side by side with the white, bondage is its normal condition.

As to the endless declamation about human rights, we have only to say that human rights are not a fixed, but a fluctuating, quantity. Their sum is not the same in any two nations on the globe. The rights of Englishmen are one thing, the rights of Frenchmen another. There is a minimum without which a man cannot be responsible; there is a maximum which expresses the highest degree of civilization and of Christian culture. The education of the

species consists in its ascent along this line. As you go up, the number of rights increases, but the number of individuals who possess them diminishes. As you come down the line, rights are diminished, but the individuals are multiplied. It is just the opposite of the predicamental scale of the logicians. *There* comprehension diminishes as you ascend and extension increases, and comprehension increases as you descend and extension diminishes. Now, when it is said that Slavery is inconsistent with human rights, we crave to understand what point in this line is the slave conceived to occupy. There are, no doubt, many rights which belong to other men—to Englishmen, to Frenchmen, to his master, for example—which are denied to him. But is he fit to possess them? Has God qualified him to meet the responsibilities which their possession necessarily implies? His place in the scale is determined by his competency to fulfil its duties. There are other rights which he certainly possesses, without which he could neither be human nor accountable. Before Slavery can be charged with doing him injustice, it must be shown that the minimum which falls to his lot at the bottom of the line is out of proportion to his capacity and culture—a thing which can never be done by abstract speculation. The truth is, the education of the human race for liberty and virtue is a vast providential scheme, and God assigns to every man, by a wise and holy decree, the precise place he is to occupy in the great moral school of humanity. The scholars are distributed into classes, according to their competency and progress. For God is in history.

To avoid the suspicion of a conscious weakness of our cause, when contemplated from the side of pure speculation, we may advert for a moment to those pretended intuitions which stamp the reprobation of humanity upon this ancient and hoary institution. We admit that there are primitive principles in morals which lie at the root of human consciousness. But the question is, How are we to distinguish them? The subjective feeling of certainty is no adequate

criterion, as that is equally felt in reference to crotchets and hereditary prejudices. The very point is to know when this certainty indicates a primitive cognition, and when it does not. There must, therefore, be some eternal test, and whatever cannot abide that test has no authority as a primary truth. That test is an inward necessity of thought, which, in all minds at the proper stage of maturity, is absolutely universal. Whatever is universal is natural. We are willing that Slavery should be tried by this standard. We are willing to abide by the testimony of the race; and if man, as man, has everywhere condemned it, if all human laws have prohibited it as crime, if it stands in the same category with malice, murder and theft, then we are willing, in the name of humanity, to renounce it, and to renounce it forever. But what if the overwhelming majority of mankind have approved it? What if philosophers and statesmen have justified it, and the laws of all nations acknowledged it?—What then becomes of these luminous intuitions? They are an *ignis fatuus* mistaken for a star.

We have now, brethren, in a brief compass—for the nature of this address admits only of an outline—opened to you our whole hearts upon this delicate and vexed subject. We have concealed nothing. We have sought to conciliate no sympathy by appeals to your charity. We have tried our cause by the Word of God; and though protesting against the authority of Reason to judge in a question concerning the duty of the Church, we have not refused to appear at its tribunal. Are we not right, in view of all the preceding considerations, in remitting the social, civil and political problems connected with Slavery to the State? Is it not a subject, save in the moral duties which spring from it, which lies beyond the province of the Church? Have we any right to make it an element in judging of Christian character? Are we not treading in the footsteps of the flock? Are we not acting as Christ and His Apostles have acted before us? Is it not enough for us to pray and labour, in our lot, that all men may be saved, without

meddling as a Church with the technical distinctions of their civil life? We leave the matter with you. We offer you the right hand of fellowship. It is for you to accept it or reject it. We have done our duty. We can do no more. Truth is more precious than union; and if you cast us out as sinners, the breach of charity is not with us, as long as we walk according to the light of the Written Word.

The ends which we propose to accomplish as a Church are the same as those which are proposed by every other Church. To proclaim God's truth as a witness to the nations; to gather his elect from the four corners of the earth, and through the Word, Ministers and Ordinances to train them for eternal life, is the great business of His people. The only thing that will be at all peculiar to us is the manner in which we shall attempt to discharge our duty. In almost every department of labour, except the pastoral care of congregations, it has been usual for the Church to resort to Societies more or less closely connected with itself, and yet, logically and really distinct. It is our purpose to rely upon the regular organs of our government, and executive agencies directly and immediately responsible to them. We wish to make the Church not merely a superintendent but an agent. We wish to develop the idea that the congregation of believers, as visibly organized, is the very Society or Corporation which is divinely called to do the work of the Lord. We shall, therefore, endeavour to do what has never yet been adequately done—bring out the energies of our Presbyterian system of government. From the Session to the Assembly we shall strive to enlist all our courts, as courts, in every department of Christian effort. We are not ashamed to confess that we are intensely Presbyterian. We embrace all other denominations in the arms of Christian fellowship and love, but our own scheme of government we humbly believe to be according to the pattern shown in the Mount, and, by God's grace, we propose to put its efficiency to the test.

Brethren, we have done. We have told you who we are,

and what we are. We greet you in the ties of Christian brotherhood. We desire to cultivate peace and charity with all our fellow-Christians throughout the world. We invite to ecclesiastical communion all who maintain our principles of faith and order. And now we commend you to God and the Word of His grace. We devoutly pray that the whole catholic Church may be afresh baptized with the Holy Ghost, and that she may speedily be stirred up to give the Lord no rest until He establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

VALEDICTORY LETTER.

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, greeting:

Be it known unto you, brethren, that the Presbyteries and Synods in these Confederate States, which were formerly in connection with you, have withdrawn from your jurisdiction, and organized a General Assembly for themselves. They are now a separate and independent Church. We think it due to you in comity that we should set forth a brief statement of the reasons which have impelled us to take this step, in order that you may see that we have not been influenced by the spirit of anger, resentment or schism. We have no grudges to gratify, and whatever wrong may have been done us in your recent legislation, we freely and cheerfully forgive it.

We have withdrawn, first, because we are persuaded that if we remain together our harmony is likely to be disturbed by the introduction of our political differences into our church-courts. We have taken warning from your late meeting at Philadelphia. Your proceedings there have been sanctioned by the general sentiment of your Presbyteries, and leave us no alternative but a choice betwixt endless strife and a quiet and peaceable separation.

In the next place we are convinced, that, as a general rule, church-organizations should be bounded by national lines. A division of this sort is a division for convenience and efficiency. It argues no breach of charity, and therefore implies no schism. In the circumstances of the Con-

federate and United States it seems to be peculiarly desirable that the Churches should be as independent as the Governments.

To this may be added, in the third place, that the efficiency of the Southern Church, in its efforts to evangelize the slave population, would be greatly impeded in the present condition of affairs by a Northern alliance. We deem it unnecessary to expand these reasons. They have appeared to us decisive of our duty; and, in the fear of God, for the glory of His name and for the honour and prosperity of His Church, we have, with perfect unanimity, dissolved our old ties and assumed a position of equality with yourselves. Your Faith and Order are ours. Your noble testimony for the truth in by-gone days is still ours. All that is precious in the past is still ours; and we sincerely pray, that the two Churches may hereafter have no other rivalry but that of love to the Master, and of holy zeal in His cause. We bid you Farewell!

THE

CHURCH AND SECULAR SOCIETIES.

PREFATORY NOTE.

Two brief articles are here placed under the head of "The Church and Secular Societies." They are indeed very brief, but it is thought best to insert them, because they clearly enunciate important principles.

1. The first is a Report which Dr. Thornwell, as Chairman of the Committee of Bills and Overtures, submitted to the General Assembly of 1848, and which was adopted by it as expressive of its views.

2. The second is the substance of a Speech delivered in the General Assembly at Indianapolis, in 1859. It was occasioned by a paper in which it was proposed to express the Assembly's commendation of the African Colonization enterprise. The form in which the speech is here given is derived in part from an abstract of it in Dr. Thornwell's handwriting, and in part from the reports of it in the newspapers.

SOCIETIES FOR MORAL REFORM.

A PREAMBLE and resolution have been submitted by the Executive Committee of the American Temperance Union to the General Assembly for its adoption, to which may be added an address of the New York City Temperance Society Organized on Christian Principles, transmitted to the Assembly by a committee of the Society.

Your committee would recommend, in reference to this whole subject of Temperance Societies, and all other secular institutions for moral ends, the adoption of the following minute:

The Church of Jesus Christ is a spiritual body, to which have been given the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world. It is the great instrumentality of the Saviour, through which, by his eternal Spirit, He dispenses salvation to the objects of His love. Its ends are holiness and life, to the manifestation of the riches and glory of Divine grace, and not simply morality, decency and good order, which may to some extent be secured without faith in the Redeemer, or the transforming efficacy of the Holy Spirit. The laws of the Church are the authoritative injunctions of Christ, and not the covenants, however benevolent in their origin and aim, which men have instituted of their own will; and the ground of obligation which the Church, *as such*, inculcates is the authority of God speaking in His Word, and not pledges of honour which create, measure and define the peculiar duties of all voluntary associations. In this kingdom of God the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners, and no church judi-

ciary ought to pretend to make laws which shall bind the conscience, or to issue recommendations which shall regulate manners, without the warrant, explicit or implied, of the revealed will of God. It is hence beside the province of the Church to render its courts, which God ordained for spiritual purposes, subsidiary to the schemes of any association founded in the human will, and liable to all its changes and caprices. No court of Christ can exact of His people to unite with the Temperance, Moral Reform, Colonization, or any other, Society, which may seek their aid. Connection with such institutions is a matter of Christian liberty. Their objects may be, in every respect, worthy of the countenance and support of all good men, but in so far as they are moral and essentially obligatory, the Church promotes them among its own members—and to none others does its jurisdiction extend—by the means which God has ordained for the edification of His children. Still, in the exercise of their Christian liberty, as good citizens, as patriotic subjects of the State, from motives of philanthropy, and from love to God, Christian people may choose to adopt this particular mode of attempting to achieve the good at which all Moral Societies profess to aim. They have a right to do so, and the Church, as long as they endorse no false principles, and countenance no wrong practices, cannot interfere with them. Recognizing these propositions as the truths of the Word of God, this General Assembly, as a court of Jesus Christ, cannot league itself with any Voluntary Society, cannot exact of those who are subject to its discipline to do so, but must leave the whole matter where the Scriptures leave it, to the prudence, philanthropy, and good sense of God's children; each man having a right to do as to him shall seem good.

These Societies must appeal not to church-courts, but to church-members. When they proclaim principles that are scriptural and sound, it is not denied that the Church has a right, and under certain circumstances may be bound, to bear testimony in their favour; and when, on the other

hand, they inculcate doctrines which are infidel, heretical and dangerous, the Church has a right to condemn them. In conformity with these statements, the General Assembly has no hesitation in cordially approving of abstinence from intoxicating drinks as a matter of Christian expediency, according to the words of the Apostle in Romans xiv. 21: "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak," and in expressing its affectionate interest in the cause of Temperance; and would recommend to its Ministers and Elders who have become connected with the Temperance Societies, to use every effort to prevent the introduction of any other principle as the ground of their pledge, and to throw around these institutions those safeguards which shall be the means of rescuing them from the excesses to which they are liable from influences opposed to, or aside from, the Gospel of Christ.

SPEECH ON AFRICAN COLONIZATION.

IT is with great reluctance that I rise to say a word upon this subject, and, if it were not that a principle which I deem to be one of vital importance is at stake, I would not venture to open my lips. My reluctance is increased when I reflect how easily my motives may be misconstrued, and an opposition which really proceeds on one ground may be, wilfully in some cases, unintentionally in others, attributed to another ground. Let me, therefore, distinctly say that my opinions on this subject have not proceeded from any hostility to the Colonization enterprise, or to the objects which it proposes to accomplish. Whether I approve it or not is altogether impertinent to the issue in hand. My proposition is, that it lies wholly beyond your sphere. What are you? A court of the Lord Jesus Christ. What is your legitimate business here? The things which belong to His kingdom.

1. There is a distinction between the Assembly as a body of Christian gentlemen—a meeting of good Christian citizens, and this Assembly organized as a *court* of Jesus Christ. This distinction is often lost sight of. Now, the question of Colonization is very proper for such a convention of Christian gentlemen; but as a court we are assembled in the name of Christ, and act by His authority, and in this sense our power in relation to questions like this is purely declarative. Now, what have we to declare? The Word of the Lord. We have a faith and not opinions; and we speak in the language of authority. We can only declare what God has taught or enjoined in the Word. Are we prepared to say that it is a part of Christian obedience to

encourage or favour this institution, that our allegiance to Christ demands it, or that we forfeit our Christian character by not yielding it? The thing is either a duty in itself, or a matter of Christian liberty. If a matter of Christian liberty, we cannot make it anything else. Our whole duty is exhausted when we say so.

The Church is exclusively a *spiritual* organization, and possesses none but spiritual power. It is her mission to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men from the curse of the law. She has nothing to do with the voluntary associations of men for various civil and social purposes, that are outside of her pale. Ever since I have been a member of the Church I have believed this, and contended for this, and have steadily resisted associating this Church with outside organizations. The Lord Jesus Christ has never given His Church a commission to be identified with them. It is the great aim of the Church to deliver men from sin and death and hell. She has no mission to care for the things, and to become entangled with the kingdoms and the policy, of this world. The question of Colonization is a question of worldly policy. It is a question on the merits of which I wish not to speak. But no man will say that Jesus Christ has given to His ministry a commission to attend to the colonization of races, or to the arrest of the slave-trade, or to the mere physical comforts of man. It is not the business of the Church to build asylums for the insane and the blind. The Church deals with men *as men*, as fallen sinners standing in *need of salvation;* not as citizens of the Commonwealth, or philanthropists, or members of society. Her mission is to bring men to the Cross, to reconcile them to God through the blood of the Lamb, to imbue them with the Spirit of the Divine Master, and then send them forth to perform their social duties, to manage society, and perform the functions that pertain to their social and civil relations. The Church has no right, no authority, to league herself with any of the institutions of the State, or such as have for their object

mere secular enterprises. "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's;" but let the Church of Christ lend her energies directly to the accomplishment of her own high and glorious mission. She deals with the great interests of immortality. The blessings she sheds upon the earth and upon the temporal interests of men are incidental, and, although incalculable, are subsidiary to the higher aims she seeks. I am willing that church-members should co-operate with this Colonization Society, and other Societies for philanthropic objects, if they see proper to do so. I am willing that they should try to do good through any agencies that their consciences may approve. But I wish the Church, as such, to keep herself to her specific work. As a Church of Christ I desire her to know neither rich nor poor, high nor low, bond nor free, to know neither East nor West, North nor South. "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead," was the mandate of her Lord to the Church; and the very moment you undertake to implicate this Church with any of the powers of the earth, you endanger her efficiency. At this very General Assembly we have declined identifying ourselves even with the American Presbyterian Historical Society—we have voted it out. We have voted out the Temperance Societies; and I would have the Assembly vote out all the Societies of this world, and keep to her proper sphere, and let the Societies keep to theirs, and do good in their own way without asking the Church's co-operation. It is this principle that I deem absolutely indispensable to the purity and success of the Church in her peculiar mission.

2. We are positively precluded by the Constitution of our Church from touching this subject. The Confession of Faith says: "Synods and councils are to handle or conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical: and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the Commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary: or by way of advice for satisfaction of conscience,

if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate." (Chap. xxxi., sec. 4.) This matter is not ecclesiastical; it is civil. The inference is obvious. The same view is sustained by the sections of our Form of Government, in which the powers of the General Assembly are articulately specified. (Chap. xii., sec. 4, 5.)

3. Is it claimed that the incidental bearings which these institutions have on religion give the Church a right to meddle with them? See where that principle would carry you. It would make the Church a party in Presidential elections. It would end, if pushed to its legitimate consequences, in the subjection of the State to the Church. Every interest of man would be brought under the power of the Church. The Church would be a society of universal good!

4. The moral power of opinion is not the kind of power which the Church exercises. Hers is the spiritual power of the Word of God—the testimony of Jesus.

5. The real sphere of the Church, in reference to these institutions, is to condemn them when their principles contravene the command of God, and, in reference to the State, to petition when it makes wrong laws; and when they are right, her influence is that of a sanction in the impulses of the new life which, in her proper sphere, she produces. The Church, as such, is spiritual, but this spiritual life enters into all the relations of man, and Christianizes all his institutions. Hospitals and Lunatic Asylums, for example, partake of its moulding influence. She gives the life; the concrete forms in which that life appears she leaves to the Providence of God to determine. Things indifferent are not to be indifferently done.

6. It may be supposed that opposition to Abolitionism has produced these views. This is a great mistake. They have been formed entirely in regard to other matters. I do not exclude Slavery wholly and absolutely from the sphere of the Church. It has religious aspects. What I exclude is the question touching the manner in which society shall

be organized. The relation of its classes and races, their respective rights and privileges, the position of woman, the equality or inequality of citizens,—these are questions which belong to the State; and when the State does not violate the law of God, the Church has nothing to do but to accept society as given, and labour to make all its parts work harmoniously.

7. We would impair Christian liberty by the adoption of the policy which has been recommended in regard to these secular institutions.

8. Let the Church adhere to the maxim of Leighton; while others are preaching to the times, let her preach for eternity.

9. It may be urged that good men favour our endorsement of these societies; but we are not to regard any man as infallible. Calvin had his errors; Luther committed blunders; Melancthon trimmed. We know how to venerate without blind idolatry.

To the view which has been presented this Church has been steadily coming up; and, in consequence, what a spectacle does she this hour present to the country and to the world! She stands pre-eminently the great conservative power of this land, the great bond of union and witness for the truth; directly interfering with no temporal interests, but blessing and protecting all, whilst she aims only at the glory of her God in the salvation of the souls of the people. And why does our beloved Zion stand thus "the beauty of the land"? It is, sir, because the only voice she utters is the Word of God, because no voice is heard in her councils but His, and because her only guide is the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. I glory in the position of this Church. And, sir, this conservative principle is the only one which will carry us safely through all sectional strife. I love my Church and I love my Country. I was once attended by a young gentleman, a native of Great Britain, through the Tower of London; and we passed through the long apartments and corridors, in which

were deposited the trophies which England's prowess had won in her many wars. As my companion pointed me with becoming patriotic pride to these trophies which attested his country's triumphs, I raised myself to the fullest height my stature would permit and replied, Your country has carried on two wars with mine, but I see no trophies here won from American valour. Let our Church lend herself, in the name of her Lord, and in His strength, and in her own proper sphere, to her own mission, and her enemies will never rejoice over trophies won from her. The Constitution of this Church and that of the Country were adopted in the same year. The Assembly began with this Confederacy. God grant that they may be both perpetual! And they will be perpetual if the Churches of our land are faithful to their trust. Sir, the salt that is to save this country is the Church of Christ—a Church that does not mix up with any political party, or any issues aside from her direct mission. I have no faith in parties or men, Republicans or Democrats, Congresses or Presidents—the times are dark—but I have faith in God, and if we are faithful to Him, for the Church's sake He will preserve the country.

[In reply to some objections urged against the views he had advocated, Dr. Thornwell further said:]

All I wish to do is to set my opinions in a true light. I think it will hardly be denied that—first, the Church is a kingdom not of this world; secondly, her authority is only ministerial and declarative; thirdly, the power which is given to her is to be exercised for spiritual ends only. If the Church will keep within her own bounds, she will be an agency that will purify and bless the world; but if she goes beyond her proper sphere, she will not only fail to accomplish her mission, but will do mischief. Like the ocean she purifies even by her agitation, whilst acting within her bounds and banks; but like the ocean, too, if she break beyond them nothing can be more destructive or desolating. Let the Church work on at the very foundations of moral

and spiritual influences, which are the foundations of society, let her do her appropriate and appointed work, and she will sanctify the world. But let her go out of her sphere, and affect interference with the temporalities of men, and she will fail. Whenever she forgets that her mission is to bring men to the Cross and to salvation, she comes down from her high vantage-ground. Whenever the Church speaks at all she must speak in the name of the Lord, and she must speak what the Lord bids her. Show me that the Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the Church to engage in the business of transferring men from one place to another, and I will yield and unite in the effort. But until you convince me that this is the business that the Head of the Church has committed to her I must earnestly resist any proposal to identify her with such business.

MISCELLANEA.

PREFATORY NOTE.

The articles which have been already given in this volume comprise, so far as is known, all of what Dr. Thornwell has left directly touching the Church—its officers, operations, discipline and relations. A few other pieces are here added under the head of *Miscellanea*, some of which, although not mainly ecclesiastical in their bearing, contain statements of value in regard to certain aspects of the worship, relations and offices of the Church.

The first is a Review of the General Assembly of 1847, of which Dr. Thornwell was the Moderator.

The second is a Report submitted to the General Assembly of 1855 at Nashville.

The third is a Report presented to the Synod of South Carolina, at its sessions at Chester, in 1856.

The fourth is a Sermon preached in the Presbyterian Church, Columbia, S. C., on Wednesday, November 21, 1860, which the State of South Carolina had set apart for Fasting and Prayer. It is inserted here because it develops the author's opinions in regard to the relation of the pulpit to political themes, and of civil governments to church-establishments.

The fifth is a paper submitted by Dr. Thornwell to the First General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church, at Augusta, Ga., in 1861. It was withdrawn by him, on the ground that circumstances did not permit a full discussion of the subject.

The sixth is a fragment of a sermon preached at the close of the Examination of the Theological Seminary at Columbia, June 30, 1853.

The seventh is a sermon preached at the ordination of the Rev. John Douglas by the Presbytery of Bethel at Purity Church, Chester, April 30, 1836. It was one of Dr. Thornwell's earliest efforts, and is here given, not because of any elaborateness in the discussion, but because its intense earnestness and deep spirituality are suited to make it useful.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1847.

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America met, agreeably to appointment, in the First Presbyterian Church in the city of Richmond, Virginia, on Thursday, 20th May, 1847, and was dissolved, according to the forms of the Constitution, on Monday evening, the 31st of the same month. It is a gratifying circumstance that, whatever discrepancies of opinion exist in regard to the wisdom or propriety of its acts, no imputation has yet been cast upon its spirit. Everything was "done decently and in order."

An eye-witness of all its proceedings, we cheerfully concede to it a large share of Christian courtesy and brotherly affection, and, as a natural consequence of this temper, its debates were distinguished by the dignity, sobriety, calmness and moderation which became the ministers of the religion of Jesus. Its history, indeed, furnishes, according to the view which we shall take of some of its decisions, fresh proofs of the fallibility of man in his best estate; yet, while we censure what we deem to be wrong, we love to linger in memory upon its delightful sessions, to recall discussions, in which the temper was always better than the argument—good as the argument sometimes was—and to dwell upon the faces of friends, honoured as brethren for Christ's sake, and respected, as men, for those sterling qualities of the head and the heart which dignify and adorn society.

But the cup of human pleasure is seldom unmixed. Our recollections of this Assembly are tinged with sorrow, when we encounter upon its roll the name of a brother, beloved

in the Lord, who was sitting for the last time in an earthly court of the Redeemer. Our readers must excuse us for dropping a tear at the grave of PRICE. Though unknown, perhaps, to many of them, he was known to us; and we have often admired in him "a combination and a form,

> Where every god did seem to set his seal
> To give the world assurance of a man."

His noble frame was a true index to his noble heart—the home, if ever earthly bosom were the home, of generous sentiments, of warm affections, and of manly impulses. We have felt the cordial grasp of his hand, we have shared the hospitality of his roof, we have gone with him to the house of God, we have been cheered by his playfulness in the social circle; and the relations of the past, and the love which we bear to his name, exact from us no less an offering than the humble tribute which we here pay to his memory. He is joined, we trust, to the General Assembly and Church of the first-born. Cut down in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, when his thoughts were turned to his family, his friends and his home, the suddenness of his departure proclaims with awful emphasis: "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."

DR. HODGE'S SERMON.

The Assembly was opened with a sermon by Dr. Hodge, on the support of the ministry, from 1 Cor. ix. 14: "Even so hath God ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." The principal point which the preacher seemed anxious to establish was, that the obligation of furnishing this support rests, not "on the individual congregation which the Minister serves," but "upon the Church as one, and the Church as a whole." He contended for "nothing so visionary as that every Minister, in every part of the country, should receive the same salary." Much less did he contemplate the endowment of the ministry by "a permanent fund, from the interest of which all salaries

should be paid. The principle," said he, "which we wish to establish would be fully satisfied, if our Board of Missions, instead of giving a tantalizing pittance, were authorized and enabled to give an adequate support, to every Minister in its service, devoted to his work—that is, not engaged in any secular employment, but consecrating his whole time to the service of the Church."

The doctrine of this discourse seems destined, for a season at least, to a growing popularity. It was evidently received with great favour by a large portion of the Assembly. The melancholy failure of the churches, under existing arrangements, to fulfil their obligations to their Pastors has prepared the mind of the ministry for any principle, *any* plan, not obviously false or foolish, which should give a reasonable hope of efficiency and success.

That we are greatly at fault somewhere, is beyond all question; but if the source of the evil is to be found in the spiritual condition of the churches—as we are inclined to believe that it is—the remedy should be obviously sought, not in a change of plan, but in serious and scriptural efforts to elevate the standard of piety. We want, *not wiser schemes*, but *more life*. If the hearts of our people were pervaded with love to God, commiseration for the souls of men, and attachment to the ordinances of the Gospel, if they had a juster appreciation of the interests of eternity, the glories of redemption, and the vanity of earthly things, the silver and the gold would not be wanting, God's house would not be left desolate, and the ministers of Christ would be free from anxiety about their daily bread. It is possible, indeed, that arrangements might be devised, by which a larger and steadier revenue might be secured, without a corresponding improvement in piety—there might be more effort without more life or zeal. But we doubt whether such a state of things is at all desirable. The efforts of the Church should be healthful, not spasmodic, the result of its *life*, and not of *machinery*.

We are clear, however, that the system contemplated by

Dr. Hodge, whatever might be its success among us as a matter of financial policy, and whatever has been its success among other denominations that have partially adopted it, is not the system contemplated in the Standards of our own Church. The question upon whom the obligation to support the ministry devolves is answered by our Constitution, in the form which it prescribes for the prosecution of a call, and in the arrangements which it makes for planting the Gospel in vacant and destitute parts. The doctrine is obviously implied, that this obligation rests, not upon the Church as one and the Church as a whole, but upon the party, whoever it may be, that calls a Minister to his work. If a church calls him as a Pastor, that church promises to support him; first in the call, and afterwards when the pastoral relation is instituted. If a Presbytery calls him, as an Evangelist, to its vacant and destitute fields, that Presbytery engages to support him. And if the General Assembly calls him to plant churches where the name of Christ is not known, the General Assembly must support him. This last is the only case in which the obligation rests upon the Church as one and the Church as a whole, and then, it is only because the Church as one and the Church as a whole is the party that immediately employs him in his work. The settled principle of our Church seems to be directly the reverse of that for which Dr. Hodge has contended in his sermon. The change contemplated is radical, and it becomes us to pause before we overturn our ancient foundations to get quit of evils which attach, after all, not so much to our system as ourselves.

While, however, it is the obvious principle of our government, that those who employ a Minister are bound to provide for his support, it is equally an article of our creed, that the strong should assist the weak. Where congregations are too feeble, or too poor, to assume of themselves the obligations of pastoral relations, it is their privilege to apply for aid to their wealthier brethren, and the duty of their brethren to grant it. God has indeed rendered it

incumbent upon them to support the institutions of the Gospel among them; but he has not required of them to make brick without straw. He has given them the right to levy contributions upon the rich when their own resources are inadequate. Upon this principle, and not upon the doctrine that it is the duty of the Church in its collective capacity to provide for the maintenance of the ministry, the Board of Missions has been founded. It was designed to be a bond of communion between the affluent and needy —an organ, through which the poor might ask, and the rich might grant, whatever aid the exigencies of the Gospel demand. The principle of the Board is a just one, whether the *Board* be a wise arrangement or not; and we do not see but that our system of ministerial support is as perfect in theory as the wit of man can make it. While it institutes a near and tender relationship between every Pastor and his charge, it binds the charges together in ties of mutual charity and dependence, which bless alike the givers and the receivers. It is a plan, as it strikes us, in beautiful accordance with the spirit of the Gospel—it preserves the unity of the Church, without disturbing the free and healthy action of its parts.

Our design, however, is not to discuss the general question, but to express our dissent from the cardinal principle of Dr. Hodge's sermon. When the edition of Chalmers' Economics by the Board of Publication made its appearance, we read the preface with regret. Our conviction was and is, that anything analogous to the Sustentation Committee there contemplated is fraught with danger; and our apprehensions are far from being diminished by the able and elaborate efforts of one of the ripest scholars and soundest divines in our Church to establish the principle upon which such a Committee might be justified. We see no method of carrying out these general schemes, without a change in the whole system developed in our Standards; and as we do not believe that the gain will be equal to the risk, we have felt it our duty to indicate our fixed and set-

tled purpose to abide by the ancient landmarks. We appreciate the motives of our brethren—they are pure, honourable and noble; but to err is human. And we submit to them in candour, whether it is not as much the duty of the Church as one and the Church as a whole to select and appoint Ministers, as it is to support them—whether the right of election and the right of patron are not inseparable; and if the people delegate one to a central committee, we would farther inquire, how long they are likely to retain the other. It is better to "bear those ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of."

PRESBYTERIAL AND SYNODICAL COMMISSIONS.

The question concerning the right of our primary courts to act by Commission was brought before the Assembly by a very able and elaborate report of Dr. Hodge on a resolution referred by the last Assembly to a special Committee, consisting of himself and Drs. Lindsley, Musgrave, McFarland and McDowell, affirming it to be contrary to the Constitution and uniform practice of the Presbyterian Church in the United States for any ecclesiastical judicatory to appoint a Commission to determine, judicially, any case whatever. This question was originally brought before the Assembly of 1846, upon a review of the records of the Synod of Virginia. Two Presbyteries within the bounds of that Synod, Winchester and Lexington, had claimed and exercised the power; and their action having been approved by the Synod, the point was made in the Assembly embraced in the resolution to which we have referred. The report of Dr. Hodge furnishes conclusive proof that the appointment of such Commissions is contrary neither to the Constitution nor the uniform practice of the Church. A motion was first made to adopt the report, and, after an earnest and animated discussion, that motion was laid upon the table, for the purpose of moving the indefinite postponement of the resolution submitted by the previous Assembly to the Committee, and the final disposition was the indefinite post-

ponement of the whole subject. The Assembly, by this vote, refused either to affirm or deny that our primary courts possess the right in dispute.

The question before the Assembly was not as to the right to appoint Committees or Commissions—this was universally conceded—but as to the powers with which they might be legitimately invested; the precise point in dispute was, whether a court could resolve itself into a portion of its own members. Now, to us, this question seems perfectly plain: the Commission contemplated in the resolution of 1846 is not a separate and independent body entrusted with delegated powers, it is in no proper sense an *agent* of the court which appoints it; but it is the *court* itself, resolving to be constituted *as such*, with less than a majority of its members. The appointment of certain persons by name precludes none others from attending; all the members of the court are *de jure* members of the Commission; the only purpose of the appointment is to render it certain that *some* shall attend, by making it their special duty to do so.

When any ecclesiastical judicatory, therefore, nominates a Commission, it does nothing more than issue a command to the individuals specified to attend at the time and place, and for the purpose mentioned, at the same time declaring that these persons so attending shall constitute a quorum of the court, even if none others should be present. This seems to us to be a true statement of the case; and if Commissions are to be condemned, we are at a loss to determine upon what principle the provision of our government, making the quorum of a court consist in many cases of a very small fraction of its members, can be defended.

It is quite a mistake to suppose, as some in the Assembly seem to apprehend, that the right to appoint a Commission is founded upon the right to *delegate power*. According to this view, there would be no necessity that the members of the Commission should be members of the court.

If a Session, Presbytery or Synod possessed inherent powers which it could legitimately entrust to others, we see

not why it should be restricted in entrusting them to agents exclusively selected from itself. But the truth is, the right to delegate power at all pertains to no ecclesiastical judicatory. Christ, according to all Protestant Confessions, is the Head of the Church; and all the powers of all its courts are derived from Him. These courts are His agents to do His will; and if a delegate cannot transfer his commission, no more can they commit their functions to any other hands. They are to do themselves the work which their Master has imposed upon them. Possessing no original and inherent jurisdiction, all their powers are restricted to themselves. If a Commission were an agent, acting with delegated powers, we should unhesitatingly pronounce it to be unlawful.

And here we would respectfully ask of those who, upon this ground, denied the right of our primary courts to act by Commission, upon what principle they justify the appointment of *Boards* to do the principal business of the Church? These Boards are possessed either of delegated powers or of none at all. Now, if the Church has no original, inherent powers to delegate, how can these organizations be consistently defended? If the Church has original and inherent powers to delegate, then why may they not as well be delegated to Commissions as to them? It seems to us, that the line of argument, pursued in the Assembly against the doctrine of Dr. Hodge's report, is fatal to the whole system of machinery which our Church has adopted. It proceeded, it is true, upon a mistaken hypothesis in regard to Commissions, and therefore proved nothing in reference to them; but, if just and conclusive in its principles, it achieves a much wider destruction than its authors originally contemplated.

THE McQUEEN CASE.

On the afternoon of Tuesday, the 25th of May, judicial case No. I. was taken up, being a complaint on the part of Rev. Colin McIver and others against a decision of the Synod of North Carolina, confirming a decision of the Presbytery of Fayetteville restoring the Rev. Archibald

McQueen to the functions of the Gospel ministry. The history of this case is probably known to most of our readers. Mr. McQueen had been suspended from the ministry, and excommunicated from the Church, for marrying the sister of his deceased wife. In the fall of 1844, or the spring of 1845 (we have not the records before us), he applied to the Presbytery of Fayetteville to be restored to the privileges of the Church and the office of the ministry. This request was refused. Of this refusal, he complained to the Assembly of 1845, and that Assembly having heard the complaint, came to the following remarkable decision:

"*Resolved*, That the prayer of the memorialist be granted, so far as that this General Assembly recommend to the Presbytery of Fayetteville to re-consider their decision in the case of the Rev. Archibald McQueen; and if in their judgment it should appear conducive to the peace of the Church, and the promotion of religion in the region around them, to restore Mr. McQueen to the communion of the Church and to the exercise of the functions of the Gospel ministry, on the ground that in his case the ends of discipline are attained by the operation of the sentence under which Mr. McQueen has been lying for a period of three years."

The matter having been thus remanded to the Presbytery, the Presbytery referred it to the Assembly of 1846, and by that Assembly the reference was indefinitely postponed. The Presbytery again took up the subject of his request, complied with the recommendation of the Assembly of 1845, and restored him to the privileges of the Church and the functions of the ministry. The Rev. Colin McIver and others complained of this decision to the Synod of North Carolina; the Synod sustained the Presbytery, and the complainants then arraigned the decision of the Synod before the last Assembly. That Assembly refused to entertain the complaint, on the ground that it had no jurisdiction in the case. The language of the decision is:

"WHEREAS, The Rev. Archibald McQueen prosecuted a

complaint before the Assembly of 1845, against the Presbytery of Fayetteville, for refusing to restore him to the exercise of the Gospel Ministry, and did at the same time memorialize that Assembly to decree his restoration; and, WHEREAS, that Assembly did take up and judicially entertain the said complaint, and pronounced judgment in the case by authorizing and recommending the Presbytery to restore said Archibald McQueen to the Gospel ministry, provided that in the judgment of the Presbytery it was wise to do so; and, WHEREAS, the Presbytery, in the exercise of the discretion thus confided to them, did restore Mr. McQueen; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That the complaint of the Rev. Colin McIver and others, against the Synod of North Carolina, for having sustained the action of the Presbytery of Fayetteville, in restoring the said Archibald McQueen, in accordance with the judicial decision of the Assembly of 1845, cannot be entertained by this house, and is hereby dismissed.

"In making this disposition of the above mentioned complaint, this General Assembly wishes it to be distinctly understood that they do not mean either to retract or modify any judgment hitherto expressed by any Assembly respecting the offence for which Mr. McQueen was suspended from the exercise of the Gospel ministry. They simply declare that his case cannot be regularly brought before them by this complaint."

It will be seen from the terms of this decision, that the question of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of such marriages, and the degree of turpitude involved in them, was not before the house; neither did the Assembly directly or indirectly mean to affirm that the restoration of a minister, under such circumstances, was constitutional and right. But it was conceived, that the General Assembly of 1845 had really decided the case; so that while the complaint was formally against the decision of the Synod of North Carolina, it was truly and in fact against the decision of the Assembly of 1845. It is evident, that if that Assembly had *reversed* the

action of the Fayetteville Presbytery, and fully sustained the complaint of Mr. McQueen, no complaint could have been constitutionally made to any succeeding Assembly. This action, whether wrong or right, would have been final. Now, this is precisely what the Assembly of 1847 maintained that the Assembly of 1845 *virtually* did. It recommended to the Presbytery of Fayetteville to re-consider the decision, and to *restore* Mr. McQueen upon certain specified conditions, of which the Presbytery was to be the judge; affirming, at the same time, that in his case the ends of discipline had been answered by the operation of the sentence under which he had been lying for a period of three years. The Presbytery re-considers the matter, and judges that the conditions are fulfilled. What then? They are advised by the Assembly to restore. They *do;* and the question is, Can a complaint legitimately lie against an act of compliance with the advice of a superior court? It is virtually the Assembly's act. The Presbytery was nothing but its organ, and the whole responsibility rests upon it. This, as we understood it, was the view taken of the McQueen case by those who voted in the majority in the last Assembly; and consequently nothing was, in fact, decided but the question of jurisdiction. The Assembly said nothing more than that it could not undertake to censure a court for obeying the will of its superior.

We are inclined to think, however, that this view is not in accordance with the facts; and that the complaint might have been entertained and issued on the ground, that, under the recommendation of 1845, the Presbytery had actually decided *not* to restore Mr. McQueen, and that the case complained of was really a *new* one. The Assembly of 1845 recommended that the Presbytery should re-consider its proceedings. The re-consideration accordingly took place, and the decision substantially was, that the peace of the Church and the promotion of religion in the region around about them, required that Mr. McQueen should be restored, if restored at all, *not* by *them*, but by the General Assembly

itself. They, consequently, refer the matter to the Assembly. It was not, as we understood it, a reference "for *advice*, preparatory to a decision"—*that* they had from the Assembly of 1845—but a reference for "*ultimate trial and decision*" by the Supreme Court. By this reference, according to our Discipline, "they totally relinquished the decision, and submitted the whole cause to the final judgment of the superior judicatory." The case completely passed out of their hands. As to *them*, it was finally and irreversibly disposed of, unless it had been sent back by the higher Court. The Assembly of 1846 took up this reference, and decided that it should be indefinitely postponed, which was, in effect, saying, that its farther consideration should be forever dropped. The matter ought here to have ended. Subsequently to the dissolution of the Assembly, the Presbytery of Fayetteville takes up the case again—the very case which by its own previous action it had put beyond its reach; and which the Assembly of 1846 had declared should be no longer agitated. Now, by what right does this Presbytery presume to re-consider a *second* time? Not by the advice of the Assembly of 1845, for the *re-consideration* then recommended had already taken place. It was evidently an irregular proceeding; and, however the authority of the Assembly of 1845 may be pleaded in its favour, it was beginning the case *de novo* upon its own merits, and the action of the Presbytery was, consequently, a legitimate subject of complaint. This is the light in which the thing strikes our minds.

Besides, it would have been more satisfactory to all parties to have issued the case according to the forms of the Constitution, although the verdict would probably have been precisely the same as the present decision. There would, then, have been no ground for the imputation, which, however unjustly, has yet been insinuated, that the Assembly was disposed, either from motives of tyranny or impatience, to deprive the people of their rights. The sense of justice in the proceedings would have been more

completely met, though equal dissatisfaction might have been incurred by the final issue. We have no doubt ourselves that the last Assembly acted honestly and in good faith, though we do not believe that the action was right.

As to the recommendation of the Assembly of 1845, it was evidently in gross defiance of the letter of our Standards. It is true, that incest is a crime which admits of various degrees of turpitude, but according to our covenanted articles *all* the degrees of it, even the lowest, are distinguished by this circumstance, that they are incompatible with the marriage relationship. Parties connected with each other by the prohibited ties of affinity or blood can never enter into the marriage contract.[1]

It is no doubt a more aggravated crime to marry a mother, a sister, or an aunt, than to marry the sister of a deceased wife; but all the cases agree in this, that the marriage is invalid. It is null and void, from the simple fact that the parties are incompetent to make the contract. This is the doctrine, whatever may have been the practice, of our Church. The only satisfactory evidence, therefore, which can be furnished in case of incest that the parties have repented consists in separation. They cannot live together as man and wife. It is just as wicked to perpetuate the contract as it was to make it. Hence, according to our Standards, Mr. McQueen has never repented, and the ends of discipline have consequently never been answered in the punishment to which he has submitted. He is as guilty to-day as he was when the Presbytery deposed him. If the law of the Church is more stringent, upon this subject, than that of the Bible, it ought to be changed; but as long as we profess to believe that our Standards faithfully exhibit the mind of the Spirit, our practice and our creed ought to be consistent. There is something revolting in the thought, that we should extend to men the hand of Christian fellowship, and commit to their charge the solemn functions of

[1] Vide Confession of Faith, chap. xxiv., sec. 4.

the ministry, that we should hail them as brethren in Christ Jesus, and enjoin upon the people to receive the Word of the Lord at their mouths, when, according to the Confession which we have published to the world, they are living in the daily commission of gross and flagrant iniquity. Such trifling is horrible and monstrous. It were better that the whole law of marriage were expunged from our Standards, than that we should be systematically guilty of the bad faith involved in professions which are not believed or never meant to be enforced. If it is our purpose to tolerate incest, let us cease to pronounce it to be a crime. Let us be consistent, and not make our Church the jest of the mocker, and the scoff of the profane.

REPORTS OF THE BOARDS.

A very important part of the business which comes before every Assembly consists in the reports of its various Boards. They are the organs through which the Church is endeavouring to discharge her duty in reference to the wants of a famishing world. To supply the destitutions of our own land; to plant the Gospel in the dark corners of the earth, amid the habitations of cruelty, idolatry, and crime; to rear an educated ministry, and to furnish the Church with a literature worthy of its creed,—these are the objects contemplated in the system of agencies which the Assembly has felt called, in the providence of God, to establish. These are objects worthy of the Church, and any body which professes the name of Christ, and looks with cold indifference upon the moral desolations of the world, is a stranger to the spirit of the Gospel, profoundly ignorant of the true vocation of the Church, and has reason to tremble at the righteous judgments of the Lord. A Church which cannot send the Gospel to the heathen is self-condemned as to its polity; a Church which *will* not send it is *dead*. But while we cordially approve the objects contemplated by the Assembly, in the organization of its Boards, we are not satisfied that the schemes actually

adopted are in exact accordance with the distinctive principles of our government. It seems to us that all the advantages of division of labour, which, it must be confessed, belong to the present system, might be secured with a less cumbrous and complicated apparatus. We would gain in simplicity, if nothing more, by dropping the *Board* and retaining only the Executive Committee. The responsibility of the Committee, on the present plan, is indirect and circuitous—it reports to an intermediate body, no more competent to investigate its acts than the Assembly itself. Why not make it the immediate creature of the Assembly itself? What is the use of the Board as distinct from the Committee? We pass, every year, through the solemn formality of electing Directors, and yet, it is morally certain that these Directors contribute nothing to the efficiency of the system; while they may be a shield between the Assembly and the real agents in the case. There is something ludicrous in the importance which we seem to attach to the *Boards*, when, in point of fact, the Executive Committees are Boards, Committees, and everything.

But whether our plans be good or bad, they never can be successful until there is a fuller comprehension of the true vocation of the Church. As long as our people refuse to be strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, they will cling to the beggarly elements which render earth desirable. The spirit of the world is in the Church, and until that spirit is expelled we can expect no sacrifices for the Gospel, no labour and zeal and self-denial worthy of the cause of our Divine Master. We want a baptism of the Holy Spirit. The heart sickens at the recital of vacancies and destitutions, perpetuated, in many cases, by the avarice which God curses as idolatry, and we shudder at our state when a large proportion of our churches contribute *nothing* to spread the Gospel among the perishing and the lost. God grant that the Spirit of all grace may be poured out upon our widespread communion; and that our diligence, fervour and zeal may correspond to the immense benefits which we pro-

fess to have received, and which God commands us to make known to others!

The Reports of the various Boards show in what measure the Church is fulfilling her obligations to her Head. The business which they bring before the Assembly is emphatically the business which should employ its most anxious thoughts and ardent prayers; and we are inclined to think that the proceedings which take place upon them are made too much a matter of form. The Assembly has confidence in its Boards, and therefore hardly takes the trouble to go into that minute consideration of facts and details which might exert a salutary influence upon the hearts of its members. At the last Assembly, we thought we could discover the symptoms of a change; and we hope that a deeper interest will be awakened hereafter in matters that so pre-eminently pertain to the spiritual prosperity of Zion.

PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS.

The Board of Education, to whom the subject of Parochial Schools was committed by the Assembly of 1846, made, on Saturday, May 22, an extended and elaborate Report, which was referred to Drs. Hodge, Jones, and Janeway, together with Messrs. Snowden and McIlvaine. The action of the Assembly is embodied in the following resolutions:

1. *Resolved*, That the Report be committed to the Board of Education, in order that it may be printed and circulated among the churches.

2. *Resolved*, That this Assembly do hereby express their firm conviction, that the interests of the Church and the glory of the Redeemer demand that immediate and strenuous exertions should be made, as far as practicable, by every congregation to establish within its bounds one or more primary schools, under the care of the Session of the Church, in which, together with the usual branches of secular learning, the truths and duties of our holy religion shall be assiduously inculcated.

3. *Resolved*, That this Assembly do hereby earnestly call upon all the Synods and Presbyteries under their care to take the subject of Christian education under consideration, and to devise and execute whatever measures they may deem most appropriate for securing the establishment of Parochial and Presbyterial Schools in our bounds.

4. *Resolved*, That a committee, consisting of one Minister and one Ruling Elder, be appointed by each Presbytery, to collect information as to the number and condition of schools within the bounds of Presbytery; the number of children under fifteen years of age belonging to their congregations; the state of public opinion in respect to education; the ability of the churches to sustain teachers and build school-houses, and whatever other statistical information relating to education they may deem important; and that these committees forward their reports to the Board of Education, on or before the 1st of January, 1848.

5. *Resolved*, That this whole subject be referred to the Board of Education, and that the Board is hereby authorized to expend whatever moneys are committed to them for that purpose, in aid of the establishment of Parochial and Presbyterial Schools.

6. *Resolved*, That it be recommended to the Board of Publication to make inquiries on the subject of elementary school-books, with a view of adapting them, as far as practicable, to a system of religious instruction, and that the Board report on this subject to the next General Assembly.

On one of the nights during the sessions, Dr. Hodge preached a sermon upon the subject, which was heard by many with profound interest, and seemed to give additional impulse to the cause. The Assembly has entered upon a grand experiment. Our only fears arise from the condition of the country, and the habits and associations of the American people. Religion *must* be a part of education; and if it cannot be made so without committing education to the Church, why then, the Church must take charge of it. The

State has advantages in some respects which the Church does not possess; but if the distinctive principles of Christianity are to be excluded from the schools of the State, these schools must be abandoned. The great problem to be solved in this country is the introduction of religion, THE WHOLE RELIGION OF THE BIBLE, into the public institutions of learning. That problem *must* be solved, or the Church will be driven to establish institutions of her own. We hope in some future number to recur to this subject, and therefore shall dismiss it for the present.

DEMISSION OF THE PASTORAL OFFICE.

The subject of the demission of the pastoral office, referred by the previous Assembly to this, was committed to Messrs. Junkin, Prior, Hoyt, Bullock, and Snowden. Dr. Hoge was subsequently added to the committee. The Assembly finally determined to send to the Presbyteries the following sections, to be embodied as a part of the Constitution of the Church:

"*Resolved*, That it be referred to the Presbyteries, whether the following sections shall be added to the 15th chapter of our Form of Government, viz.:

"XVI. The office of a Minister of the Gospel is perpetual, and cannot be laid aside at pleasure. No person can be divested of it but by deposition. Yet, from various causes, a Minister may become incapable of performing the duties of the office; or he may, though chargeable with neither heresy nor immorality, become unacceptable in his official character. In such cases, he may cease to be an acting Minister.

"XVII. Whenever a Minister from any cause, not inferring heresy or crime, shall be incapable of serving the Church to edification, the Presbytery shall take order on the subject, and state the fact, together with the reasons of it, on their records. And when any person has thus ceased to be an acting Minister, he shall not be a member of any Presbytery or Synod, but shall be subject to discipline as

other Ministers. *Provided always*, that nothing of this kind shall be done without the consent of the individual in question, except by advice of the Synod."

Nothing, to us, can be plainer than that he who has mistaken his call should be permitted to retire from the labours and obligations of the ministry. He should retrace his steps. We entertain no doubt that the low views, which have too extensively prevailed in regard to the nature of a call to the sacred office, have induced many to assume its responsibilities whom the Lord never sent. The doctrine has been proclaimed, and proclaimed in high places, that every young man of talent and education, who can plead no clear and definite vocation to secular employments, is bound to become a preacher. The Education Societies, too, have multiplied temptations—first, by making the ministry an object of desire, as a convenient means of procuring an education; and then, by shutting up the candidate to the necessity of actually entering upon its duties, under the penalty of being burdened with debt. In the by-laws of our own Board, under the head of Candidates and Appropriations, it is provided, among other things in the 14th Article, that "if any candidate fail to enter on or to continue in the work of the ministry, unless he can make it appear that he is providentially prevented, he shall refund, with interest, all the money he may have received of this Board." This rule ought to be repealed. It presents a motive of interest to the young man who has mistaken his vocation to prevaricate with his conscience, his Church, and his God. It makes honesty a *sacrifice*. In our view, it would be infinitely better that all the funds should be lost, than that a single man, without the anointing of the Spirit, should be induced, by the stringent application of this rule however wisely intended, to curse the Church with unbidden ministrations. We should give to the uncalled no facilities for entering the ministry. We should give them all possible encouragement in renouncing it. We hope, therefore, that the Presbyteries will act upon the overture

submitted by the Assembly, and that something may be done to lessen an evil which cannot be wholly prevented.

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE.

The letters from the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, and the General Assembly of the Church of Ireland, were presented by the Stated Clerk, on the second day of the sessions, and referred, without being read, to the Committee on Foreign Correspondence. When the answers of the Committee were reported, the reading of these letters was called for. They were occupied almost exclusively with the subject of Slavery; and as the terms, particularly of the Irish letter, were anything but decent and conciliatory, there was a strong disposition at first to resist the reading, on the ground that it ill-comported with respect for ourselves and the dignity of the Assembly, to listen to lectures, in which it were hard to say whether ignorance, vulgarity or fanaticism were the predominating element. The letters, however, were finally read, and the answers adopted. The substance of these answers was briefly this, that our correspondence with Ireland and Scotland must cease, unless Ireland and Scotland shall be content to drop the subject of Slavery. We desire no instruction from foreign lands; we know and understand our duty.

These letters assume what never can be proved from the Word of God, nor the light of nature, that Slavery is essentially a sin. That there are abuses connected with the institution, may be freely and honestly conceded; but let it be remembered that in this fallen world, disfigured with the curse of the Almighty, the nearest, tenderest, holiest relations of life are liable to enormous perversions, and may be made the parents of unspeakable wretchedness, the occasions of aggravated crime. To infer that the Presbyterian Church in this country, because it tolerates Slavery as an existing institution, licenses the cruelty of tyrants, or approves the oppression which inhumanity may inflict, is foul injustice and reproach. We stand upon the platform of the Bible.

God's word recognizes the relation of master and servant, as a relation that may lawfully subsist, and defines the duties incumbent upon the parties. The Church, as a spiritual body, should attempt no more, and can do no less.

There are two extremes of opinion against which we should guard. The first is, that Slavery is exclusively a civil institution, and that the Church possesses no jurisdiction in regard to it. The second is, that as it is a natural evil, like poverty or disease, a state pregnant with temptations and inconveniences, the Church should endeavour, by wise and judicious means, to effect its ultimate abolition. Both propositions are false. Though a civil and political institution, it is the subject of moral duties; and the Church has a right to exact the faithful performance of these duties from all her members who are masters or slaves. Cruelty to a servant is as much the subject of ecclesiastical censure as cruelty to a wife. The Church must rebuke *all* sin in *all* the relations of life. The slave she must require to be faithful; the master, merciful and just.

As to the other opinion, it mistakes entirely the true vocation of the Church. It is a spiritual body, and has no right to interfere directly with the civil relations of society. Whether Slavery shall be perpetuated or not, whether arrangements shall be made to change or abolish it, whether it conduces to the prosperity of States or hinders the progress of a refined civilization,—these are questions not for the Church but the State, not for Ministers but statesmen. Christian men may discuss them as citizens and patriots, but not as members of the Church of Jesus Christ. As it is clear from the Bible that Slavery is not a sin, the Church, *as such*, has no more right to seek its extinction than to seek a change in the political structure of a nation. We might just as consistently demand from the Church of Scotland, or the Irish Assembly, the adoption of measures to subvert the monarchy and peerage of the realm, as they can exact from us the institution of efforts to abolish the condition of the slave. As Christian men and as Christian Min-

isters, we are bound to seek not the freedom but the salvation of our race. We are to know no man after the flesh; the pardon, conversion, holiness and peace of all mankind, whether bond or free, male or female, these are the objects of the Church's prayers and the Church's zeal. Her mission is accomplished when she has brought them all, as well the master and servant as the husband and wife, to the knowledge of Christ, and trained them by the Word, the ministry and ordinances, for the inheritance of the saints in light. Their political and social relations here are not within the province of her immediate labours. She has no commission to make the poor rich, nor the rich poor, the bond free, nor the free bond; it is not her province to subvert monarchies and institute republics, nor to overturn republics and establish despotism; she is to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.

If the churches of Ireland and Scotland could be induced to recognize these principles, a pleasant and profitable correspondence might be conducted with them. We honestly believe, however, that the gain would be greater to them than to us. The leaders of the Free Church have displayed a moral heroism and magnanimity which are worthy of all praise; but as a Church, upon the primitive plan, untrammeled by the State, trusting in God and supported by the voluntary contributions of the people, we are more than half a century older than they are. Scotland has just emerged from a dreary bondage, and though she be delighted with her freedom, there are still symptoms that she lusts for the flesh-pots of Egypt. The Free Church has never renounced the *principle* of alliance with the State. She is still afraid to commit her ministry to the liberality and affections of the people, and seeks in funds and splendid endowments the patronage from Mammon which she was obliged to relinquish from Cæsar. She has evidently much to learn; and we, of all others, are the people whom

the providence of God has qualified to teach her. Ours is, and by the blessing of God always shall be, a *free* Church. We wish neither State-patronage nor permanent endowments. We have no treasury but the pockets of God's people, and our Ministers go forth to the work of the Lord without purse or scrip, in firm reliance upon His gracious providence and the love which His children bear to His name. We know of not a single element, essentially characteristic of a Church, in which Scotland can claim a superiority to us. Accidental advantages she may possess. Profounder scholarship and more varied learning may distinguish her divines, but in the practical exemplification of the true theory of a Church, it is no arrogance to say that we are far, very far, in advance of her. Still, the freshness of her zeal, and the warmth of her first love, might exert a salutary influence on us, if a fair and honourable correspondence could be maintained.

But if she and her sister in Ireland choose to become Abolition propagandists, and to denounce the Country and Constitution which we love, then we should not submit to insults which are none the less arrogant because they pretend to be Christian admonitions, and we should not listen to counsels which cannot be consistently carried out without shaking our glorious Union or laying our Republic prostrate in the dust. A correspondence purchased at such a price is quite too dear for American freemen and American Christians. We should deserve the castigation we receive, if, while the Bible sustains us, we could tamely consent to be impleaded at the bar of a Scotch or Irish Assembly as a pack of reprobates and sinners—to have the vocabulary of reproach exhausted upon our heads and the curse of Heaven denounced against ourselves and our children. Christianity and nature forbid us to bear it. The sympathies of the world, we know, are against us; we are blackened and reviled upon the right hand and the left, but we have the testimony of a good conscience, the earnest of God's approbation, and we ask no more. Our position cannot be suc-

cessfully assailed without an impeachment of the authority of the Scriptures. We stand or fall with them.

In the present position of affairs, the probability is, that the cessation of the correspondence would be of advantage to the Free Church itself. Its connection with us has been trying to the last degree. The pressure of public opinion against it, instigated by infidels, fanatics and abolitionists, has been tremendous in consequence of the comparatively moderate tone which its master-spirits have given to its testimonies and deliverances on the subject of American Slavery. This dead weight, which its fellowship with us imposes, it would no longer be doomed to carry if the correspondence were brought to a close.

WAR WITH MEXICO.

The Assembly, near the close of its sessions, adopted appropriate resolutions in reference to the war with Mexico. We commend this subject to our churches. The signs of the times are ominous that peace may be even more disastrous than the war. Those who have an interest at the throne of grace should beseech the God of heaven to interpose and to save our Union from dismemberment and our country from disgrace. To His hands we would humbly commit our destinies, and we close with the fervent prayer, that He would give to our Senators wisdom, to our magistrates fidelity, and to all our people the fear of His own Almighty Name.

REPORT ON SYSTEMATIC BENEFICENCE.

THE last General Assembly enjoined upon Pastors to give greater prominence, in the ministration of the Word, to the doctrine of the Scriptures as set forth in our Standards, that saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship in relieving each other. A series of resolutions was adopted, setting forth, in the first place, the principle upon which the whole scheme of Systematic Benevolence is founded, and then enjoining upon the Presbyteries the adoption of some practicable method by which the end proposed might be accomplished.

As this is the first time that a Committee on Systematic Benevolence has entered as an element into the organization of the Assembly, there seems to be a propriety in prefacing its first report with a somewhat fuller statement of the principle which underlies the subject. As it is not to be presumed that God's people are niggardly on principle, or parsimonious from covetousness, the inadequacy of their contributions to the treasury of the Lord must be resolved into ignorance of duty, or a failure to apprehend the real relation of liberality in almsgiving to their Christian profession. As whatsoever is not of faith is sin, so whatsoever does not appeal to their faith cannot permanently interest their hearts. The Churches have been too much accustomed to look upon *giving* as purely a matter of Christian liberty—a thing which might or might not be done according to the impulses which happened to prevail at the moment, without in either case involving the integrity of Christian character; and hence what has been given has been regarded as a charity, and those who solicited it have been represented as beggars. This has been the feeling,

implicitly recognized, where it has not been explicitly enounced. Appeals in behalf of the dearest interests of Christ's kingdom have been, in many cases, coldly received, if not formally repulsed, on the plea that there was too much begging. The difficulty was, not that these people were penurious or mean, but that they did not understand the real nature of the case; and the difficulty will be removed not by denunciation or invective, but by explaining the scriptural principle upon which these appeals are made. The law of the Lord, clearly apprehended, will always tell upon the hearts and consciences of all who love the Saviour in sincerity. That law, in relation to this matter, is, that liberality is a grace of the Spirit, almsgiving an office of Christian worship, and collections for the poor and the spread of the Gospel an ordinance of God. It is as really a duty to give as to pray; while the acceptance of our gifts is a greater proof of the Divine condescension than the acceptance of our prayers. God needs none of our offerings. The cattle upon a thousand hills are His, and if He were hungry He would not tell us. But, although needing nothing at our hands, He has condescended, for our good, to assume a position in which He appeals to us as really and effectually as if He needed all things. The believer, accordingly, who enters into the spirit of the Scripture doctrine, would feel it almost as great a grievance to be debarred from casting his mite into the treasury of the Lord as to be debarred from the throne of grace; and would as soon think of turning Christ from his doors, and branding, as obtrusive begging, a personal application on His part, as think of turning away the appeals of Christ's earthly kingdom to his contributions and his charities. It is Christ whom we honour in the interests of His kingdom, or rather it is Christ who honours us in permitting us to honour Him. And as all Christian duties are privileges, and every precept stands upon a promise, so the child of God habitually experiences that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." It is this principle, con-

necting, as it does, almsgiving with faith, and making our gifts equally with our prayers a part of worship, which underlies the whole subject of Systematic Benevolence. What is wanted to put new energy into the Church, and to make our offerings commensurate with our resources, is to have this principle adequately explained and generally understood. To keep it before the Church is one important end of the appointment of this Committee.

Almsgiving being at once a duty and a privilege, an ordinance of God and a means of grace, it is manifestly the duty of the church-courts to impart this as well as every other blessing of the Gospel to the Christian people. They must see to it that every child of God has the opportunity of giving, as well as of hearing the Word.

REPORT ON FOREIGN MISSIONS.

THE Committee to whom was referred the Annual Report of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, having considered the same, beg leave to recommend the following resolutions:

1. That the work of Foreign Missions is not only in accordance with the general temper and positive injunctions of the Gospel, but with every impulse and habit of the renewed and sanctified heart. It gives scope for the exercise of every Christian virtue, whether active or passive, for the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope; and, though men may not countenance and favour it who are as indifferent to the salvation of others as of themselves, the true believer cannot stand aloof from it without renouncing, to the extent of his apathy, his Christian profession. The very nature of his life demands this species of exercise. The harmony of his soul with God is in nothing more conspicuously manifested than in cordial sympathy with the Divine purpose that the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together. That glory is Christ, and He is revealed in the promulgation of the Gospel.

2. That the Synod has witnessed with pleasure the successful operation of the plan adopted by it many years ago, founded on the principle that the contribution of alms and offerings to the service of God is, in its habit, a Christian grace, and, in its exercise, an element of worship. This is the doctrine of the Scriptures, the doctrine of our Standards, and, we rejoice to say, is becoming the practice of the Church. The result, wherever it has been tried, has been

propitious. In our own case, the amount given has been, with the exception of one or two years, steadily increasing. The Executive Committee reports this year five hundred dollars more than it reported last year. This is highly encouraging. Still, there are churches which have contributed nothing; and the Synod cannot but enjoin it upon Pastors and Sessions to see to it that every man have the opportunity of presenting his alms and offerings to the treasury of the Lord, and be instructed in his duty and privilege.

SERMON ON NATIONAL SINS.

"And it came to pass, when King Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord."—ISAIAH xxxvii. 1.

I HAVE no design, in the selection of these words, to intimate that there is a parallel between Jerusalem and our own Commonwealth in relation to the Covenant of God. I am far from believing that we alone, of all the people of the earth, are possessed of the true religion, and far from encouraging the narrow and exclusive spirit which, with the ancient hypocrites denounced by the Prophet, can complacently exclaim, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are we. Such arrogance and bigotry are utterly inconsistent with the penitential confessions which this day has been set apart to evoke. We are here, not like the Pharisee, to boast of our own righteousness, and to thank God that we are not like other men; but we are here like the poor publican, to smite upon our breasts, and to say, God be merciful to us sinners! My design, in the choice of these words, is to illustrate the spirit and temper with which a Christian people should deport themselves in times of public calamity and distress. Jerusalem was in great straits. The whole country had been ravaged by a proud and insolent foe. The Sacred City remained as the last hold of the State, and a large army lay encamped before its walls. Ruin seemed to be inevitable. "It was a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy. The children had come to the birth, and there was not strength to bring forth." In the extremity of the danger the sovereign betakes himself to God. Renouncing all human confidences and all human alliances, he rent his clothes, and

covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord.

In applying the text to our own circumstances, widely different in many respects from those of Jerusalem at the time referred to, I am oppressed with a difficulty, which you that are acquainted with my views of the nature and functions of the Christian ministry can readily understand. During the twenty-five years in which I have fulfilled my course as a preacher—all of which have been spent in my native State, and nearly all in this city—I have never introduced secular politics into the instructions of the pulpit. It has been a point of conscience with me to know no party in the State. Questions of law and public administration I have left to the tribunals appointed to settle them, and have confined my exhortations to those great matters that pertain immediately to the kingdom of God. I have left it to Cæsar to take care of his own rights, and have insisted only upon the supreme rights of the Almighty. The angry disputes of the forum I have excluded from the house of the Lord. And while all classes have been exhorted to the discharge of their common duties, as men, as citizens, as members of the family, while the sanctions of religion have, without scruple, been applied to all the relations of life, whether public or private, civil or domestic, the grounds of dissension which divide the community into parties, and range its members under different banners, have not been permitted to intrude into the sanctuary. The business of a preacher, as such, is to expound the Word of God. He has no commission to go beyond the teaching of the Scriptures. He has no authority to expound to senators the Constitution of the State, nor to interpret for judges the law of the land. In the civil and political sphere the dead must bury their dead. It is obvious, however, that religious sanctions cannot be applied to civil and political duties without taking for granted the relations out of which these duties spring. Religion cannot exact submission to the powers that be without implying that these powers are known and con-

fessed. It cannot enjoin obedience to Cæsar without taking it for granted that the authority of Cæsar is acknowledged. When the Constitution of the State is fixed and settled, the general reference to it which religion implies, in the inculcation of civil and political duties, may be made without intruding into the functions of the magistrate, or taking sides with any particular party in the Commonwealth. The relations which condition duty are admitted, and the conscience instantly recognizes the grounds on which the Minister of the Gospel exhorts to fidelity. The duties belong to the department of religion; the relations out of which they spring belong to the department of political science, and must be determined apart from the Word of God. The concrete cases to which the law of God is to be applied must always be given; the law itself is all that the preacher can enforce as of Divine authority. As the law without the facts, however, is a shadow without substance; as the duty is unmeaning which is determined by no definite relations; the preacher cannot inculcate civil obedience, or convict of national sin, without allusions, more or less precise, to the theory and structure of the government. He avoids presumption, by having it distinctly understood, that the theory which he assumes is not announced as the Word of God, but is to be proved as any other facts of history and experience. He speaks here only in his own name, as a man, and promulges a matter of opinion, and not an article of faith. If the assumptions which he makes are true, the duties which he enjoins must be accepted as Divine commands. The speculative antecedents being admitted, the practical consequents cannot be avoided. There are cases in which the question relates to a change in the government, in which the question of duty is simply a question of revolution. In such cases the Minister has no commission from God to recommend or resist a change, unless some moral principle is immediately involved. He can explain and enforce the spirit and temper in which revolution should be contemplated and carried forward or abandoned. He can

expound the doctrine of the Scriptures in relation to the nature, the grounds, the extent and limitations of civil obedience; but it is not for him, as a preacher, to say when evils are intolerable, nor to prescribe the mode and measure of redress. These points he must leave to the State itself. When a revolution has once been achieved, he can enforce the duties which spring from the new condition of affairs.

Thus much I have felt bound to say, as to my views of the duty of a Minister in relation to matters of State. As a citizen, a man, a member of the Commonwealth, he has a right to form and express his opinions upon every subject, to whatever department it belongs, which affects the interests of his race. As a man, he is as free as any other man; but the citizen must not be confounded with the preacher, nor private opinions with the oracles of God. Entertaining these sentiments concerning the relations of the sacred office to political affairs, I am oppressed with the apprehension, that in attempting to fulfil the requisitions of the present occasion I may transgress the limits of propriety, and merge the pulpit into the rostrum. I am anxious to avoid this error, and would, therefore, have it understood, in advance, that whatever theory may be assumed of the nature and structure of our Government is assumed upon the common grounds of historical knowledge, and is assumed mainly as fixing the points from which I would survey the sins of the country. If true—and no man has a right to reject them without being able to disprove them—my conclusions in reference to our national guilt are irrefragably established. If not true, we must either deny that we are sinners, or must seek some other relations in which to ground the consciousness of sin. If that consciousness should be thoroughly grounded, the services of this day will not be in vain. I can truly say that my great aim is not to expound our complex institutions, but to awaken the national conscience to a sense of its responsibility before God. It is not to enlighten your minds, but to touch your hearts; not to plead the cause of States' rights or Federal authority,

but to bring you as penitents before the Supreme Judge. This is no common solemnity. The day has been set apart by the constituted authorities of this Commonwealth, by joint resolution of both branches of the Legislature, and proclaimed by the Chief Magistrate of the State, as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer. South Carolina, therefore, as an organized political community, prostrates herself this day before God. It is a time of danger, of blasphemy and rebuke, and, imitating the example of Hezekiah, she rends her clothes, covers herself with sackcloth, and comes into the house of the Lord. The question is, how she should demean herself under these solemn circumstances. Every minister, this day, becomes her organ, and he should instruct the people as to the attitude which we should all assume in the presence of Jehovah. It is a day of solemn worship, in which the State appears as a penitent, and lays her case before the Judge of all the earth.

The points to which I shall direct your attention are, first, the spirit in which we should approach God, and, secondly, the errand on which we should go.

I. As the individual, in coming to God, must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, so the State must be impressed with a profound sense of His all-pervading providence, and of its responsibility to Him as the moral Ruler of the world. The powers that be are ordained of Him. From Him the magistrate receives his commission, and in His fear he must use the sword as a terror to evil doers and a praise to them that do well. Civil government is an institute of Heaven, founded in the character of man as social and moral, and is designed to realize the idea of justice. Take away the notion of mutual rights and the corresponding notions of duty and obligation, and a Commonwealth is no more conceivable among men than among brutes. As the State is essentially moral in its idea, it connects itself directly with the government of God. It is, indeed, the organ through which that government is administered in its relations to

the highest interests of earth. A State, therefore, which does not recognize its dependence upon God, or which fails to apprehend, in its functions and offices, a commission from heaven, is false to the law of its own being. The moral finds its source and centre only in God. There can be no rights without responsibility, and responsibility is incomplete until it terminates in a Supreme Will. The earthly sanctions of the State, its rewards and punishments, are insufficient either for the punishment of vice or the encouragement of virtue, unless they connect themselves with the higher sanctions which religion discloses. If the State had to deal only with natures confessedly mortal; if its subjects were conscious of no other life than that which they bear from the cradle to the grave; if their prospect terminated at death; if they were only brutes of a more finished make, but equally destined to everlasting extinction, who does not see that the law would lose its terror, and obedience be stripped of its dignity? The moral nature of man is inseparably linked with immortality, and immortality as inseparably linked with religion. Among Pagan idolaters, the instinct of immortality, though not developed into a doctrine, nor realized as a fact in reflection, is yet the secret power which, in the spontaneous workings of the soul, gives efficacy to punishment, and energy to rewards. Man feels himself immortal, and this feeling, though operating blindly, colours his hopes and his fears. The State, therefore, which should undertake to accomplish the ends of its being, without taking into account the religious element in man, palsies its own arm. Subjects that have no religion are incapable of law. Rules of prudence they may institute; measures of precaution they may adopt; a routine of coercion and constraint they may establish; but laws they cannot have. They may be governed like a lunatic asylum; but where there is no nature which responds to the sentiment of duty, there is no nature which confesses the majesty of law. Every State, therefore, must have a religion, or it must cease to be a government of men. Hence no Com-

monwealth has ever existed without religious sanctions. "Whether true or false, sublime or ridiculous," says the author of the Consulate and the Empire, "man must have a religion. Everywhere, in all ages, in all countries, in ancient as in modern times, in civilized as well as in barbarian nations, we find him a worshipper at some altar, be it venerable, degraded, or blood-stained."

It is not only necessary that the State should have a religion; it is equally necessary, in order to an adequate fulfilment of its own idea, that it have the true religion. Truth is the only proper food of the soul, and though superstition and error may avail for a time as external restraints, they never generate an inward principle of obedience. They serve as outward motives, but never become an inward life, and when the falsehood comes to be detected, the mind is apt to abandon itself to unrestrained licentiousness. The reaction is violent in proportion to the intensity of the previous delusion. The most formidable convulsions in States are those which have been consequent upon the detection of religious imposture. "When a religion," says McCosh, "waxes old in a country; when the circumstances which at first favoured its formation or introduction have changed; when in an age of reason it is tried and found unreasonable; when in an age of learning it is discovered to be the product of the grossest ignorance; when in an age of levity it is felt to be too stern; then the infidel spirit takes courage, and, with a zeal in which there is a strange mixture of scowling revenge and light-hearted wantonness, of deep-set hatred and laughing levity, it proceeds to level all existing temples and altars, and erects no others in their room." The void which is created is soon filled with wantonness and violence. The State cannot be restored to order until it settles down upon some form of religion again. As the subjects of a State must have a religion in order to be truly obedient, and as it is the true religion alone which converts obedience into a living principle, it is obvious that a Commonwealth can no more be organized which shall

recognize all religions, than one which shall recognize none. The sanctions of its laws must have a centre of unity somewhere. To combine in the same government contradictory systems of faith is as hopelessly impossible as to constitute into one State men of different races and languages. The Christian, the Pagan, the Mohammedan, Jews, Infidels and Turks, cannot coalesce as organic elements in one body politic. The State must take its religious type from the doctrines, the precepts, and the institutions of one or the other of these parties.

When we insist upon the religious character of the State, we are not to be understood as recommending or favouring a Church Establishment. To have a religion is one thing, to have a Church Establishment is another; and perhaps the most effectual way of extinguishing the religious life of a State is to confine the expression of it to the forms and peculiarities of a single sect. The Church and the State, as visible institutions, are entirely distinct, and neither can usurp the province of the other without injury to both. But religion, as a life, as an inward principle, though specially developed and fostered by the Church, extends its domain beyond the sphere of technical worship, touches all the relations of man, and constitutes the inspiration of every duty. The service of the Commonwealth becomes an act of piety to God. The State realizes its religious character through the religious character of its subjects; and a State is and ought to be Christian, because all its subjects are and ought to be determined by the principles of the Gospel. As every legislator is bound to be a Christian man, he has no right to vote for any laws which are inconsistent with the teachings of the Scriptures. He must carry his Christian conscience into the halls of legislation.

In conformity with these principles, we recognize Christianity to-day as the religion of our Commonwealth. Our standard of right is that eternal law which God proclaimed from Sinai, and which Jesus expounded on the Mount. We recognize our responsibility to Jesus Christ. He is

Head over all things to the Church, and the nation that will not serve Him is doomed to perish. Before men we are a free and sovereign State; before God we are dependent subjects; and one of the most cheering omens of the times is the heartiness with which this truth has been received. We are a Christian people, and a Christian Commonweath. As on the one hand we are not Jews, Infidels or Turks, so on the other we are not Presbyterians, Baptists, Episcopalians, or Methodists. Christianity, without distinction of sects, is the fountain of our national life. We accept the Bible as the great moral charter by which our laws must be measured, and the Incarnate Redeemer as the Judge to whom we are responsible.

In contending that Christianity is the organic life of the State, we of course do not exclude from the privileges of citizens, nor from the protection of the laws, those who do not acknowledge the authority of Jesus. They do not cease to be men, because they are not Christians, and Christian principle exacts that their rights should be sacredly maintained by an institute which is founded in the idea of justice. As, moreover, the religion of the State realizes itself through the religious life of its subjects, it is not to be supported by arbitrary tests or by civil pains and disabilities. Religion is essentially free and spontaneous. It cannot be enacted as a law, or enforced by authority. When the State protects its outward institutions, such as the sanctity of the Sabbath, it enjoins nothing which does violence to any man's conscience. It is only giving vent to the religious life of the people, without exacting from others what they feel it sinful to perform; and so long as freedom of conscience and the protection of their rights are secured to men, they have no reason to complain that they are not permitted to unsettle the principles upon which all law and order ultimately rest. As long as they are not required to profess what they do not believe, nor to do what their consciences condemn; as long as they are excluded from no privilege and deprived of no right, they cannot complain

that the spirit and sanction of the laws are a standing protest against their want of sympathy with the prevailing type of national life. If Christianity be true, they ought certainly to be Christians. The claim of this religion, in contradistinction from every other, or from none at all, is founded only in its truth. If true, it must be authoritative, and the people who accept it as true would be traitors to their faith if they did not mould their institutions in conformity with its spirit. It is only as a sanction, and not as a law, that we plead for its influence; and how a Christian people can have any other than Christian institutions it surpasses our intelligence to compass. That the State should treat all religions with equal indifference is to suppose that the subjects of the State can have a double life, flowing in parallel streams, which never approach nor touch —a life as citizens, and a life as men. It is to forget the essential unity of man, and the convergence of all the energies of his being to a religious centre. It is to forget that religion is the perfection of his nature, and that he realizes the idea of humanity in proportion as religion pervades his whole being. A godless State is, in fact, a contradiction in terms; and if we must have some god, or cease to be citizens because we have ceased to be men, who will hesitate between the God of the Bible and the absurd devices of human superstition and depravity?

It is, then, before the Supreme Jehovah that we prostrate ourselves to-day. We come as a Commonwealth ordained by Him. We come as His creatures and His subjects. The sword by which we have executed justice we received from His hands. We believe that He is, that He is our God; that His favour is life, and His loving-kindness better than life. We ascribe to His grace the institutions under which we have flourished. We trace to His hands the blessings which have distinguished our lot. Under Him the foundations of the State were laid, and to Him we owe whatsoever is valuable in our laws, healthful in our customs, or precious in our history. We come this day to

acknowledge our dependence, swear our allegiance, and confess our responsibility. By Him we exist as a State, and to Him we must answer for the manner in which we have discharged our trust. "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty. He judgeth among the gods."

II. Having explained the spirit in which we should approach God, let me call your attention, in the next place, to the ERRAND which brings us before Him this day—fasting, humiliation, and prayer. These terms define the worship which we are expected to present. Fasting is the outward sign; penitence and prayer are the inward graces. In fasting, we relinquish for a season the bounties of Providence, in token of our conviction that we have forfeited all claim to our daily bread. It is a symbolical confession that we deserve to be stripped of every gift, and left to perish in hunger, nakedness, and want. On occasions of solemn moment, and particularly when "manifestations of the Divine anger appear, as pestilence, war, and famine, the salutary custom of all ages has been for Pastors to exhort the people to public fasting and extraordinary prayer." Through such a solemnity Nineveh was saved; and if we are equally penitent, who shall say that we may not also be delivered from the judgments which our sins have provoked? Fasting, apart from inward penitence, is an idle mockery. "Is it such a fast as I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house, when thou seest the naked that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" The great thing with us to-day is, to be impressed with a sense of our sins as a people; to confess them humbly before God; to deprecate His judgments, and

to supplicate His favour. We are too apt to restrict the notion of sin in its proper sense to the sphere of the individual; to regard it as altogether private and personal, and not capable of being predicated of the mal-administration of the State. But if the State is a moral institute, responsible to God, and existing for moral and spiritual ends, it is certainly a subject capable of sin. It may endure, too, the penalty of sin, either in its organic capacity, by national judgments, by war, pestilence, weakness, and dissolution; or, in its individual subjects, whose offences as citizens are as distinctly transgressions as any other forms of iniquity, and enter into the grounds of the Divine dispensations towards them. The State exists under a law which defines its duty. It is a means to an end, which limits its powers and determines its functions. It is the realization of an idea. Like an individual, it may sin by defect in coming short of its duty, and sin by positive contradiction to it. It may fail to comprehend its vocation; it may arrogate too much, or claim too little. It may be wanting in public spirit, or it may give public spirit a wrong direction. It may subordinate the spiritual to the material, and, in encouraging the increase of national wealth, neglect to foster national greatness. In aspiring to be rich and increased in goods, it may forget that the real glory of a nation is to be free, intelligent, and virtuous. The power which it has received as an instrument of good it may pervert into an engine of tyranny. It may disregard the welfare and prosperity of its subjects, and degenerate into a tool for the selfish purposes of unscrupulous rulers. It may seek to aggrandize factions, instead of promoting the well-being of the people. The State, too, as a moral person, stands in relations to other States, in consequence of which it may be guilty of bad faith, of inordinate ambition, of covetousness, rapacity, and selfishness. The same vices which degrade the individual among his fellows may degrade a Commonwealth among surrounding nations. It may be mean, voracious, insolent, extortionary. It may cringe to the strong, and oppress the weak. It may take

unworthy advantages of the necessities of its neighbours, or make unworthy concessions for temporary purposes. The same laws regulate, and the same crimes disfigure, the intercourse of States with one another, which obtain in the case of individuals. The political relations of the one are precisely analogous to the social relations of the other. The same standard of honour, of integrity and magnanimity which is incumbent upon their subjects is equally binding upon the States themselves, and character ought to be as sacred among sovereign States as among private individuals.

The true light, therefore, in which national defects and transgressions should be contemplated is formally that of sins against God. Their injustice to their people is treachery to Him, and their failure to comprehend or to seek to fulfil the end of their being is contempt of the Divine authority. We take too low a view, when we regard their errors simply as impolitic; their real magnitude and enormity we can never apprehend until we see them in the light of sins.

It is to be feared that this notion of sin has not the hold which it should have of the public conscience. We are not accustomed to judge of the State by the same canons of responsibility which we apply to individuals. In some way or other, the notion of sovereignty, which only defines the relation of a State to earthly tribunals, affects our views of its relations to God; and, whilst we charge it with errors, with blunders, with unfaithfulness to its trust, and deplore the calamities which its misconduct brings upon its subjects as public evils, we lose sight of the still more solemn truth, that these aberrations are the actions of a moral agent, and must be answered for at the bar of God. The moral law is one, and the State is bound to do its duty under the same sanctions which pertain to the individual. When the State fails, or transgresses, its offences are equally abominations in the sight of God. It is clearly idle to talk of national repentance without the consciousness of national sin. This doctrine, therefore, I would impress upon you in every form of statement, that the misconduct of the State is rebellion

against God, and that a nation which comes short of its destination, and is faithless to its trust, is stained with sin of the most malignant dye. God may endure it in patience for a season, but it is loathsome and abominable in His eyes, and the day of reckoning will at last come. Sin must either be pardoned or punished; confessed and forsaken, or it will work death. Sin has been the ruin of every Empire that ever flourished and fell. Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome have paid the penalties of the Divine law. The only alternative with States, as with their subjects, is, Repent or perish. The first duty, therefore, which, as a Christian people, we should endeavour to discharge this day is to confess our national sins with humility and penitence. We should endeavour to feel their magnitude and enormity, not as injuries to man, but as offences against the majesty of God. Our language should be that of David: Against Thee, Thee only, have we sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight.

Another errand which it behooves us equally to prosecute to-day is, to seek Divine guidance and Divine strength for the future. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps;" and States are no more competent than individuals to discharge their duties without the grace of God. Let us endeavour to cherish a sense of our dependence, and aspire to the distinction of that happy people whose God is the Lord. It is a great thing to contemplate our civil duties in the light of obedience to Him; and when they are undertaken in the spirit of worship, they are likely to be performed in the spirit of faithfulness. If we are truly penitent, and truly sensible of our dependence upon God, if it is the reigning desire of our hearts to know His will, and our fixed purpose, in reliance on His strength, to do it, He may give us an answer of peace, He may bring light out of darkness, and extract safety from danger.

III. Having indicated the spirit in which we should approach God, and pointed out the purposes for which we should go, it remains that we apply the truth to our present circumstances, by signalizing the sins which it behooves us

to confess, and by designating the blessings which it behooves us to implore. The conscience is never touched by vague generalities; we must come to particulars—Thus and thus hast thou done. The State appears as a penitent this day. She has, therefore, sins to confess. There is a burden upon her heart which must needs be relieved. What are these sins? What is this burden? The completeness of our answer to these questions will measure the extent and sincerity of our repentance.

To understand our sins, we must look at ourselves in a double light—first, as a member of this Confederacy, as part and parcel of the people of these United States; and, in the next place, as a particular Commonwealth, a perfect State in ourselves. As long as we are members of this Confederacy we cannot detach ourselves from a personal interest in the sins and transgressions of the whole people; and, though there may be offences in which we have had no actual participation, we are not at liberty to indulge in a self-righteous temper, nor to employ the language of recrimination and reproach. The spectacle of sin is always sad. The fall of none should be contemplated with exultation or with triumph. We should look upon the errors of our brethren with pity and with sorrow, and, as Daniel confessed in humility and contrition and with deep commiseration for their misery the sins of his people, so, we should endeavour this day to deplore the shortcomings of our common country, as a matter of personal distress to ourselves. When we come before God, we should endeavour to contemplate the moral aspects of the country in the light of His awful holiness. And the more profoundly we are impressed with the malignity of our national guilt, the deeper should be our concern for the transgressors themselves. Sinners cannot triumph over sinners. Those whose only plea is mercy to themselves ought not to be unmerciful to others. Much more should we be filled with sorrow when the sins we deplore are likely to prove the ruin of a great nation. To behold a vast, imperial republic, like

ours—bequeathed to us by a noble ancestry, consecrated by a noble history, the work of illustrious statesmen and patriots—falling a prey to national degeneracy and corruption, is enough to make angels weep, and should wring from our hearts tears of bitterness and blood. The sin must be enormous where the punishment is so fearful. In less than a century we have spoiled the legacy of our fathers. A Christian people, with Christian institutions, the envy and admiration of the world, have not lived to the age of Pagan Greece. Surely, God has a controversy with us, and it becomes us to inquire, with all solemnity, into the cause of His fierce anger. The Union, which our fathers designed to be perpetual, is on the verge of dissolution. A name once dear to our hearts has become intolerable to entire States. Once admired, loved, almost adored, as the citadel and safeguard of freedom, it has become, in many minds, synonymous with oppression, with treachery, with falsehood, and with violence. The Government to which we once invited the victims of tyranny from every part of the world, and under whose ample shield we gloried in promising them security and protection—that Government has become hateful in the very regions in which it was once hailed with the greatest loyalty. Brother has risen up against brother, State against State; angry disputes and bitter criminations and recriminations abound, and the country stands upon the very brink of revolution. Surely, it is time to come to ourselves, to look our follies and our wickednesses in the face—time for every patriot to rend his garments, cover himself with sackcloth, and come into the house of the Lord. Let us deal faithfully this day; let us survey the sins of the land, not to accuse one another, but to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.

1. To appreciate the sins which attach to us in our unity as a confederated people, we must advert for a moment to the peculiar structure of our government. When we came out of the Revolution, it is admitted on all hands that we were separate and independent States. Each was sovereign

—that is, completely a nation in itself; but our fathers looked around them, and saw that the grounds of unity were as conspicuous as the elements of diversity. The people were of one blood, one language, one religion. They were, in short, one race. They surveyed the continent from north to south, from east to west, and its geography indicated that it ought to be the dwelling-place of a united population. While there were differences in soil, climate, and productions, that would naturally develop different types of industry, and give rise to different forms of interest, there were great connecting bonds in the mighty rivers which traversed the country, that as clearly signified that the diversity was not inconsistent with unity. The problem, accordingly, which the wisdom of our ancestors undertook to solve was, to harmonize this diversity with unity—to make the people, who were already many, at the same time, one. One nation, in the strict and proper sense, they could never become; that would be to absorb the diversity in unity. Many nations, in all the relations of sovereign States, they could not be; that would be to abolish the unity altogether. The problem was solved by a happy application of the federal principle. The diversity existed already in the many States which had just achieved their independence. These many States, in the exercise of their sovereignty, formed an alliance, which cemented them together in one body politic. This alliance was, in its principle, a treaty, and, in its result, a government. In its principle it was a treaty, because it was a compact among sovereigns. In its result it was a government, because it created organs of political power which, under certain conditions, acted immediately upon the people of all the States without the formal ratification of their own Legislatures, and in all foreign relations stood as the representative of their common sovereignty. It is obvious that the ultimate ground of the authority of federal legislation is the consent of the confederating States. The laws of Congress bind me, only because South Carolina has consented that I should

be bound. The rights of Congress are only the concessions of the sovereign States. This will appear from a moment's reflection. It is obvious that the States might have required that no measures of the Federal Government should be of force within their own borders, without the formal sanction of their own Legislatures. In that case, there could have been no dispute as to the ultimate ground of obedience. The difficulties of such an arrangement are too obvious to be enumerated; but how were these difficulties to be avoided? By surrendering the principle on which the authority of Congress depended, or, by changing the mode of its application? To have surrendered the principle would have been to abjure their own sovereignty. There was evidently, then, only a change in the mode of its application. That change consisted in defining the conditions under which consent might be presumed beforehand. The Constitution of the United States, in its grants of power to Congress, is only a device by which a general description is given, in advance, of the kind of legislation that each State will allow to be obligatory on its own people. The provisions of the Constitution are really anticipations of the concurrence of the States. They are formal declarations to the Federal Legislature, that, within such and such limits, you have our consent to bind our people. In this way our fathers organized a government that united us for all common purposes, and left us in our original diversity to prosecute our separate and local interests. Congress is, therefore, only the creature of the States, and acts only through them. It is their consent, their treaty, which gives to its enactments the validity of law. As the Federal Legislature was clearly designed to realize the unity of the people, its powers are restricted, from the very necessities of the case, to those points in which all the States have a common interest. The creature of a treaty, in which the contracting parties were all equal, it is manifestly the servant, and not the master, of the States. It is an agent, and not a principal.

If this view of the subject be correct, the Federal Gov-

ernment is pre-eminently a government whose very existence depends upon a scrupulous adherence to good faith. It requires the sternest integrity to work it. Its very life-blood is honour. Now, there are two respects in which it may fatally err. In the first place, Congress may transcend its powers, and thus be guilty of a breach of trust, and of disloyalty to its own masters. It may presume upon the consent of the States, where no consent has been given. It may forget that it is a servant, and aspire to be lord. It may forget that it is an agent, and arrogate to itself the rights and authority of the principal. When it surveys the extent of its jurisdiction, the amount of its patronage, and the weight of its influence abroad, it may become dazzled with the contemplation of its own greatness, and attribute to itself the light that is reflected upon it. Its one people it may construe into one nation, and, unmindful of its origin, treat the sovereignties which created it as dependent provinces. Treating upon a footing of equality with foreign Powers, it may insensibly ascribe to itself the authority of Kings and Emperors. All this is conceivable; to some extent it is inevitable, unless the most scrupulous integrity should reign in the Federal Councils. But to sin in any of these respects is fraud, and fraud connected with treason. In the next place, the States may break faith with one another. They may refuse to fulfil their engagements. They may pervert the Federal authorities to the accomplishment of selfish and sectional ends. They may undertake to make their common agent the minister of partial advantages, or they may use lawful powers for unlawful purposes. Here, too, in the relation of the States to each other, is wide scope for fraud.

In one, or in both these directions, we may look for instances of national transgression; and on this day we should solemnly review the history of the Republic, for the purpose of bringing our consciences before the tribunal of God. Perfidy, under all circumstances, is an aggravated sin; but when it brings in its train the destruction of institutions

which have been the hope and admiration of the world; when it subverts the foundations of a great empire, scattering the seeds of dissension, bitterness and strife; when it arms house against house, and State against State, and converts a happy union into a scene of implacable and deadly feuds,—language is hardly competent to describe the enormity of the guilt. The fraud which makes our government a failure must darken the prospects of liberty throughout the world. No polity can be devised which shall perpetuate freedom among a people that are dead to honour and integrity. Liberty and virtue are twin sisters, and the best fabric in the world, however ingeniously framed, and curiously balanced, can be no security against the corroding influences of bad faith. Perfidy is always weakness; and a government whose basis is the faith of treaties must inevitably perish before it. The combination of the federal principle with the sovereignty of States is the only arrangement which can maintain free institutions upon a broad scale. This combination can secure freedom to a continent; it might even govern the world. The day of small States is passed, and as the federal principle is the only one which can guaranty freedom to extensive territories, the federal principle must constitute the hope of the human race. It was the glory of this country to have first applied it to the formation of an effective government, and, had we been faithful to our trust, a destiny was before us which it has never been the lot of any people to inherit. It was ours to redeem this continent, to spread freedom, civilization and religion through the whole length of the land. Geographically placed between Europe and Asia, we were, in some sense, the representatives of the human race. The fortunes of the world were in our hand. We were a city set upon a hill, whose light was intended to shine upon every people and upon every land. To forego this destiny, to forfeit this inheritance, and that through bad faith, is an enormity of treason equalled only by the treachery of a Judas, who betrayed his Master with a kiss. Favoured as we have

been, we can expect to perish by no common death. The judgment lingers not, and the damnation slumbers not, of the reprobates and traitors, who, for the wages of unrighteousness, have sapped the pillars and undermined the foundations of the stateliest temple of liberty the world ever beheld. Rebellion against God and treason to man are combined in the perfidy. The innocent may be spared, as Lot was delivered from the destruction of Sodom; but the guilty must perish with an aggravated doom. The first instances of transgression may seem slight and insignificant, but when they strike at the principle of good faith, like a puncture of the heart, they strike at the root of our national life. The Union was conceived in plighted faith, and can only be maintained by a complete redemption of the pledge. The moment faith is broken, the Union is dissolved. Entertaining these views of the radical relations of good faith to the success and stability of our government, I would impress upon the country the flagrant iniquity of dealing loosely with its covenants. It is here that our dangers are concentrated, and here we should look for the sins that have provoked the judgments of God. Here is the secret of our bitter strifes, our furious contention, our deadly animosities; and, should this Government be destined to fall, the epitaph which may be written on its tomb is a memorial of broken faith.

The foregoing remarks are general, and designed to bring no railing accusation against any section of the country, but to excite every part of it to a faithful review of its dealings under the Constitution. There is one subject, however, in relation to which the non-slaveholding States have not only broken faith, but have justified their course upon the plea of conscience. We allude to the subject of Slavery. They have been reluctant to open the Territories to the introduction of slaves, and have refused to restore fugitives to their masters, and have vindicated themselves from blame by appealing to a higher law than the compacts of men. The doctrine of a higher law, properly interpreted and applied,

we are far from repudiating. God is greater than man, and no human covenants can set aside or annul the supreme obligations of His will. But, in the present case, the plea is improperly applied. If it is wrong to countenance Slavery by restoring fugitives to their masters, or by permitting it to enter into the Territories, then the true method is to abrogate the contract which requires both. We repent of sin by forsaking it, and the only way to undo a wicked bargain is to cancel it. If the non-slaveholding States cannot in conscience redeem their faith, they are bound in honour to take back their pledges, to withdraw from the Union, and to release their confederates from all the conditions of the contract. No other course can they pursue without sin. To swear to observe the Constitution, when the Constitution binds them to do what they believe to be wicked, is an oath which, whether broken or kept, cannot be taken without dishonour. To keep it is to violate the conscience in the unlawful article. To break it is to be guilty of perjury. The only escape from this dilemma is not to take it at all.

But, in truth, even upon the supposition that Slavery is immoral, there is nothing wrong in the oath to observe the Constitution. The responsibility of Slavery is not upon the non-slaveholding States. It is not created by their laws, but by the laws of the slaveholding States; and all they do, in the case of the fugitive from his master, is to remand him to the jurisdiction of the laws from which he has escaped. They have nothing to do with the justice or injustice of the laws themselves. They are simply required to say that the accident of being on their soil shall not dissolve the relation between a subject and his government. The treaty existing among the States, in reference to this point, is precisely analogous to a treaty among foreign nations, requiring the surrender of criminals that have fled from justice. The country surrendering passes no judgment upon the merits of the case. It leaves the whole of the responsibility to the laws of the country claiming jurisdic-

tion. All that it does is not to interpose and arrest the operation of those laws. Surely, there is nothing unrighteous in this; nothing unrighteous in refusing to screen a man from the authority of the code under which Providence has cast his lot. There is no obligation to do it without a treaty; but there is nothing inherently unlawful in making such a treaty, and in strictly adhering to it when made. The plea of conscience proceeds from a palpable misapprehension of the nature of the case.

The plea is still more flagrantly inadequate when applied to the exclusion of slavery from the Territories. All the States have confessedly an equal right of property in them. They are a joint possession. The citizens of any State may go there and take up their abode, and, without express contract to the contrary among the proprietors, they are at liberty to observe the customs of their own States. It is as if the land were distributed, and each State had a part. In that case, each State would evidently put its part under the jurisdiction of its own laws. The joint possession, to the extent of the partnership, places the Territory in the same relation to the laws of all the States. One has no more right to introduce its peculiarities than another, and without positive contract the peculiarities of none can be excluded. The case is as if a Christian and a Pagan people should acquire a common territory. Would it be competent for the Christian people, in the absence of a positive stipulation, to say to their Pagan neighbours, You shall not bring your idols into this land; you may come yourselves, but you come only on condition that you renounce your worship? If there is any wrong, it is in making the treaty at first; but if Christians and Pagans can enter into treaties at all, there is no crime in observing them. If they can lawfully acquire joint possession of a soil, the Pagan has as much right to introduce his idols as the Christian his purer worship. In respect to the question of Slavery, if there is wrong anywhere, it is in the union of slaveholding and non-slaveholding States in one confederacy; but,

being confederate, there can be no just scruple as to the fulfilment of their contracts. It is a mistake to suppose that the North sanctions Slavery by doing justice to the South. It leaves the whole responsibility of the institution where God has placed it—among the people of the South themselves. We do not ask the North to introduce it upon their own soil; we do not ask them to approve it; we do not ask them to speak a single word in its defence: we only ask them to execute in good faith the contract which has been solemnly ratified betwixt us. We ask them not to interfere with the jurisdiction of our own laws over our own subjects, nor with the free use of our own property upon our own soil. This is the head and front of our pretensions, and when these reasonable demands are met by the plea of conscience and the authority of a higher law, they must pardon our dulness, if we cannot understand that delicate sensibility to honour which makes no scruple of an oath that it does not mean to observe, and holds to the profit, without fulfilling the conditions, of the contract. When they ask to be released from their engagements, and, in token of their sincerity, are willing to release us from ours; when they are willing to abandon the Union rather than ensnare their consciences; when they abhor the wages, as sincerely as the deeds, of unrighteousness,—then, and not till then, they may expect their plea to be admitted.

2. In the next place, we shall find ample ground of humiliation, if we consider the manner in which the organs of Government have been perverted from their real design, and changed in their essential character. All our institutions are representative. We legislate by parliaments, we judge by courts, and we execute by officers appointed for the purpose. The people in their collective capacity do nothing but choose their representatives. They enact no laws; they conduct no trials; they execute no sentences. Now, what is the genius and spirit of a representative assembly? Is it to give expression to the popular will? Is it to find out and do what the people, if assem-

bled in mass, would do? Is it simply a contrivance to avoid the inconveniences of large convocations, and bound to seek the same results which these convocations would be likely to effect? This doctrine I utterly and absolutely deny. Representatives are appointed, not to ascertain what the will of the people actually is, but what it ought to be. The people are not permitted to legislate *en masse*, because their passions and caprices are likely to prove stronger than reason and truth. Representation is a check upon themselves. Every State is bound to realize the idea of justice. This requires calm deliberation and sober thought. To provide for this deliberation, to protect themselves from their own prejudices and passions, and to cause the voice of reason to be heard, they retire from the scene, and leave the inquiry and decision of their duty to chosen men, in whose wisdom they have confidence. This is the true theory of parliamentary government. Courts are appointed to interpret the law, and officers to execute the decrees of the courts, in order that justice and not passion may rule in every trial. The supremacy of reason and justice is the supremacy of law and order. Contemplated in this light, parliamentary government is the most perfect under heaven. It avoids equally the extremes of the despotism of a single will, which is sure to terminate in tyranny, and of the still more hateful despotism of mobs, which is sure to terminate in anarchy. It gives rise to a free Commonwealth. It aims at the true and right, and truth and rectitude are the safeguards of freedom. Such is the genius of our own institutions. But how has the gold become dim, and the fine gold changed! Has the Congress of these United States fulfilled its high idea? Called together to deliberate, to discuss, to inquire after truth, bound to listen to no voice but the voice of wisdom and justice, has it always presented the spectacle of gravity, decorum, and candour, which we expect to behold in the Senate of a free people? What shall we say, when gold has usurped the authority of truth, when votes have been bought and sold, and the interests of a fac-

tion allowed to outweigh the rights and interests of a whole people? What shall we say, when blows have taken the place of argument, and our halls of legislation have been converted into an arena for the combats of fierce gladiators? What shall we say, when, instead of the language of calm deliberation, the representatives of the people have vied with each other in vituperation and abuse, and, when they have exhausted the dialect of Billingsgate, have rushed upon each other with the ferocity of tigers, or with the fury of the bulls of Bashan? The "offence is rank, it smells to heaven." Such an awful prostitution of high functions cannot take place with impunity. The hall which should have inscribed upon its portals *The scene of wisdom and of high debate* cannot become a den of robbers, or a rendezvous for bullies and hectors, without provoking the just judgments of God. It is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation, that the Federal Legislature, which ought to have been a model of refined, impartial and courteous debate—a model to which we could always point with an honest pride—has made itself a scandal to a civilized people. The day of reckoning was obliged to come. The country is brought to the brink of dissolution.

The corruption is of the same kind when the tribunals of the law are set aside, and mobs usurp the jurisdiction of courts. There may be occasions when the established order is unable to check a threatening evil. In such cases, the necessities of self-defence may justify society in falling back upon its primordial rights. These occasions are rare. But when society assumes, without necessity, the functions of judges and magistrates, it is guilty of an abuse which, if not arrested, must end in anarchy. *There* only is security where the law is supreme; and the worst of all social evils is where the populace is stronger than the law—where the sentence of courts is annulled by the phrenzy of mobs, and the officers of justice are insulted and restrained in the execution of their functions.

In these respects, all of which resolve themselves into the

abuse of the representative principle, we have national sins to confess. We have poisoned the springs of our Government. We have given to faction what is due to truth. We have dethroned reason and justice, and made our legislation a miserable scramble for the interests of sections and parties. We have deified the people, making their will, as will, and not as reasonable and right, the supreme law; and they, in turn, have deified themselves, by assuming all the attributes of government, and exercising unlimited dominion. They have become at once legislators, judges, juries, and executioners. The last form of evil has been only occasional, but, unless checked and repressed, it may strengthen and expand. In proportion as it increases, reverence for law and for the forms of law loses its power. The tendency to sink our institutions into a pure democracy has been steadily growing. We are rapidly losing even the notion of a representative, by merging it into that of a deputy; and it is but the natural product of this error, that Congress should be the battle-ground of conflicting wills, and that its sole inquiry should become, What says the voice of the majority? *Vox populi, vox Dei.*

I have said, I think, enough to show that in our federal relations we have reason to be humbled in the presence of God. Our Government is a noble one. Human wisdom could not have devised a better. With all our unfaithfulness it has made us great and prosperous. It has won for us the homage and respect of the world; and had we been faithful to its principles, the blessings it has already conferred upon us would be but the beginning of its triumphs. Could we continue a united people, united in heart as well as in form, could the Government be administered according to the real genius of our federal and representative institutions, imagination can hardly conceive the scene of prosperity, influence and glory which would dawn upon our children a hundred years hence. When we contemplate what we might become, and then look at the prospect which is now before us, we have reason to put our hands on our

mouths, and our mouths in the dust, and to exclaim, God be merciful to us sinners! Let us weep for the country. Let us confess our own sins and the sins of the people. God may hear the cry of the penitent, and say to them, as He said to Moses when he deplored the sins of his people, "I will make of thee a great nation."

3. There are other forms of sin which, though not national in the sense that they pertain to the administration of the government, are national in the sense that they are widely diffused among the people: they enter into the grounds of the Divine controversy with us; and, if not repented of and forsaken, must end in national calamities. Conspicuous among these is the sin of profaneness. The name of God is constantly on our lips, and if the frequency with which it is used were any sign of religion, ours might pass for the most devout people under heaven. We introduce it into every subject, and upon all occasions. A sentence is never complete without it. If we are earnest, it enlivens our discourse; if we are angry, it affords a vent to our passions; if we are merry, it quickens our enjoyments, and if we are sad, it relieves our misery. Like those particles in the Greek tongue, which to the philologist give a delicate turn to the meaning, but which to the common reader might be removed without being missed, the name of God is indispensable in the vulgar dialect of the people, but it takes a practised ear to detect the shade which it gives to the sentence. Many persons would be dumb if they were not allowed to be profane. The only words which, as nimble servitors, are ready to obey their bidding, are the names of God and the awful terms in which He announces the final doom of the guilty. These are their vocabulary. Judging from the discourse which he is likely to hear in the streets, a stranger might infer that the name was all that we had left of God; that we were a nation of Atheists, who had at last discovered that He was only a word, and that, determined to make reprisals for the terrors with which superstition had clothed Him, we were degrading even the name by

the lowest associations. That a puny mortal should thus trifle with the majesty of God, and make a jest of the Divine judgments, is a spectacle which may well astonish the angels, and ought to confound ourselves. Devils hate, but they dare not make light of, God. It is only here upon earth, where the patience of God is as infinite as His being, that the name which fills heaven with reverence and hell with terror is an idle word. Profaneness naturally leads to licentiousness, by dissolving the sentiment of reverence.

Closely connected with levity in the use of the Divine name is the profaneness which treats with contempt the positive institution of the Sabbath. Here the government is implicated in the sin. It encourages the desecration of the Lord's Day by the companies which carry its mails. The Sabbath, as an external institute, is absolutely essential to the maintenance and propagation of Christianity in the world, and until the Christian religion is disproved, and the supremacy of Christ set aside, no government on earth can annul it with impunity.

It is also characteristic of our people that they are self-sufficient and vainglorious, to a degree that makes them ridiculous. They love to boast, and they love to sacrifice to their own drag and to burn incense to their own net. They feel themselves competent for every enterprise. They can scale heaven, weigh the earth, and measure the sea. Their own arms and their own right hand will get them the victory in every undertaking. Even the style of their conversation is grandiloquent. The hyperbole is their favourite figure, and the superlative their favourite degree of comparison. To hear their self-laudations, you would never dream that they acknowledged a Providence, or depended on any superior power. All this is the grossest Atheism. The consequence of this self-sufficiency is a want of reverence for anything. We honour neither God nor the king. We revile our rulers, and speak evil of dignities, with as little compunction as we profane the ordinances of religion. Nothing is great but ourselves. It is enough to indicate

these types of sin, without dwelling upon them. The important thing is to feel that they are sins. They are so common that they cease to impress us, and in some of their aspects they are so grotesque, they provoke a smile more readily than a tear.

4. Having adverted to the sins which belong to us as members of the Confederacy, let us now turn to those which belong to us as a particular Commonwealth. I shall restrict myself to our dealings with the institution which has produced the present convulsions of the country, and brought us to the verge of ruin. That the relation betwixt the slave and his master is not inconsistent with the Word of God, we have long since settled. Our consciences are not troubled, and have no reason to be troubled, on this score. We do not hold our slaves in bondage from remorseless considerations of interest. If I know the character of our people, I think I can safely say, that if they were persuaded of the essential immorality of Slavery, they would not be backward in adopting measures for the ultimate abatement of the evil. We cherish the institution, not from avarice, but from principle. We look upon it as an element of strength, and not of weakness, and confidently anticipate the time when the nations that now revile us would gladly change places with us. In its last analysis, Slavery is nothing but an organization of labour, and an organization by virtue of which labour and capital are made to coincide. Under this scheme, labour can never be without employment, and the wealth of the country is pledged to feed and clothe it. Where labour is free, and the labourer not a part of the capital of the country, there are two causes constantly at work, which, in the excessive contrasts they produce, must end in agrarian revolutions and intolerable distress. The first is the tendency of capital to accumulate. Where it does not include the labourer as a part, it will employ only that labour which will yield the largest returns. It looks to itself, and not to the interest of the labourer. The other is the tendency of population to outstrip the

demands for employment. The multiplication of labourers not only reduces wages to the lowest point, but leaves multitudes wholly unemployed. While the capitalist is accumulating his hoards, rolling in affluence and splendour, thousands that would work if they had the opportunity are doomed to perish of hunger. The most astonishing contrasts of poverty and riches are constantly increasing. Society is divided between princes and beggars. If labour is left free, how is this condition of things to be obviated? The government must either make provision to support people in idleness; or, it must arrest the law of population and keep them from being born; or, it must organize labour. Human beings cannot be expected to starve. There is a point at which they will rise in desperation against a social order which dooms them to nakedness and famine, whilst their lordly neighbour is clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day. They will scorn the logic which makes it their duty to perish in the midst of plenty. Bread they must have, and bread they will have, though all the distinctions of property have to be abolished to provide it. The government, therefore, must support them, or an agrarian revolution is inevitable. But shall it support them in idleness? Will the poor, who have to work for their living, consent to see others, as stout and able as themselves, clothed like the lilies of the field while they toil not, neither do they spin? Will not this be to give a premium to idleness? The government, then, must find them employment; but how shall this be done? On what principle shall labour be organized so as to make it certain that the labourer shall never be without employment, and employment adequate for his support? The only way in which it can be done, as a permanent arrangement, is by converting the labourer into capital; that is, by giving the employer a right of property in the labour employed; in other words, by Slavery. The master must always find work for his slave, as well as food and raiment. The capital of the country, under this system, must always feed and

clothe the country. There can be no pauperism, and no temptations to agrarianism. That non-slaveholding States will eventually have to organize labour, and introduce something so like to Slavery that it will be impossible to discriminate between them, or else to suffer from the most violent and disastrous insurrections against the system which creates and perpetuates their misery, seems to be as certain as the tendencies in the laws of capital and population to produce the extremes of poverty and wealth. We do not envy them their social condition. With sanctimonious complacency they may affect to despise us, and to shun our society as they would shun the infection of a plague. They may say to us, *Stand by, we are holier than you;* but the day of reckoning must come. As long as the demand for labour transcends the supply, all is well: capital and labour are mutual friends, and the country grows in wealth with mushroom rapidity. But when it is no longer capital asking for labour, but labour asking for capital; when it is no longer work seeking men, but men seeking work,—then the tables are turned, and unemployed labour and selfish capital stand face to face in deadly hostility. We desire to see no such state of things among ourselves, and we accept as a good and merciful constitution the organization of labour which Providence has given us in Slavery. Like every human arrangement, it is liable to abuse; but in its idea, and in its ultimate influence upon the social system, it is wise and beneficent. We see in it a security for the rights of property and a safeguard against pauperism and idleness, which our traducers may yet live to wish had been engrafted upon their own institutions. The idle declamation about degrading men to the condition of chattels and treating them as oxen or swine, the idea that they are regarded as tools and instruments and not as beings possessed of immortal souls, betray a gross ignorance of the real nature of the relation. Slavery gives one man the right of property in the labour of another. The property of man in man is only the property of man in human toil. The labourer becomes capital,

not because he is a thing, but because he is the exponent of a presumed amount of labour. This is the radical notion of the system, and all legislation upon it should be regulated by this fundamental idea.

The question now arises, Have we, as a people and a State, discharged our duty to our slaves? Is there not reason to apprehend that in some cases we have given occasion to the calumnies of our adversaries, by putting the defence of Slavery upon grounds which make the slave a different kind of being from his master? Depend upon it, it is no light matter to deny the common brotherhood of humanity. The consequences are much graver than flippant speculators about the diversity of races are aware of. If the African is not of the same blood with ourselves, he has no lot nor part in the Gospel. The redemption of Jesus Christ extends only to those who are partakers of the same flesh and blood with Himself. The ground of His right to redeem is the participation, not of a like, but of a common, nature. Had the humanity of Jesus been miraculously created apart from connection with the human race, though it might in all respects have been precisely similar to ours, He could not, according to the Scriptures, have been our Redeemer. He must be able to call us "Brethren" before He can impart to us His saving grace. No Christian man, therefore, can give any countenance to speculations which trace the negro to any other parent but Adam. If he is not descended from Adam, he has not the same flesh and blood with Jesus, and is therefore excluded from the possibility of salvation. Those who defend Slavery upon the plea that the African is not of the same stock with ourselves are aiming a fatal blow at the institution, by bringing it into conflict with the dearest doctrines of the Gospel. To arm the religious sentiment against it is to destroy it. When the question at stake is, whether a large portion of mankind can be saved, we want something more than deductions from doubtful phenomena. Nothing but the Word of God can justify us in shutting the gates of mercy upon any portion of the race.

The science, falsely so called, which proffers its aid upon such conditions is such a friend to Slavery as Joab to Amasa, who met him with a friendly greeting, "Art thou in health, my brother?" and stabbed him under the fifth rib. I am happy to say that such speculations have not sprung from Slavery. They were not invented to justify it. They are the offspring of infidelity, a part of the process by which science has been endeavouring to convict Christianity of falsehood; and it is as idle to charge the responsibility of the doctrine about the diversity of species upon slaveholders, as to load them with the guilt of questioning the geological accuracy of Moses. Both are assaults of infidel science upon the records of our faith, and both have found their warmest advocates among the opponents of Slavery. Our offence has been, that in some instances we have accepted and converted into a plea the conclusions of this vain deceit. Let us see to it that we give our revilers no handle against us; above all, that we make not God our enemy. Let us not repudiate our kindred with the poor brethren whom He has scattered among us, and entrusted to our guardianship and care. Let us receive them as bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Let us recognize them as having the same Father, the same Redeemer, and the same everlasting destiny.

Let us inquire, in the next place, whether we have rendered unto our servants that which is just and equal. Is our legislation in all respects in harmony with the idea of Slavery? Are our laws such that we can heartily approve them in the presence of God? Have we sufficiently protected the person of the slave? Are our provisions adequate for giving him a fair and impartial trial when prosecuted for offences? Do we guard as we should his family relations? And, above all, have we furnished him with proper means of religious instruction? These and such questions we should endeavour to answer with the utmost solemnity and truth. We have come before the Lord as penitents. The people whom we hold in bondage are the

occasion of all our troubles. We have been provoked by bitter and furious assailants to deal harshly with them, and it becomes us this day to review our history, and the history of our legislation, in the light of God's truth, and to abandon, with ingenuous sincerity, whatever our consciences cannot sanction. Let not the taunts of our revilers shake us from our propriety. Let it be our first care to commend ourselves to God, and, if He be for us, what does it signify who is against us? Our slaves are a solemn trust, and while we have a right to use and direct their labour, we are bound to feed, clothe and protect them, to give them the comforts of this life, and to introduce them to the hopes of a blessed immortality. They are moral beings, and it will be found that in the culture of their moral nature we reap the largest reward from their service. The relation itself is moral, and, in the tender affections and endearing sympathies it evokes, it gives scope for the exercise of the most attractive graces of human character. Strange as it may sound to those who are not familiar with the system, Slavery is a school of virtue, and no class of men have furnished sublimer instances of heroic devotion than slaves in their loyalty and love to their masters. We have seen them rejoice at the cradle of the infant, and weep at the bier of the dead; and there are many amongst us who have even drawn our nourishment from their generous breasts. Where the relations are so kindly, there is every motive of fidelity on our part. Let us apply with unflinching candour the golden rule of our Saviour. Have we rendered to our slaves what, if we were in their circumstances, we should think it right and just in them to render to us? We are not bound to render unto them what they may in fact desire. Such a rule would transmute morality into arbitrary caprice. But we are bound to render unto them what they have a right to desire—that is, we are bound to render unto them that which is just and equal. The Saviour requires us to exchange places, in order that, free from the benumbing influences which are likely to pervert the judgment, we may

appreciate what is just and equal, when there is no personal interest in the decision. I need not say that it is our duty as a Commonwealth to develop all the capabilities of good which the relation of Slavery contains. They have never yet been fully unfolded. We have had to attend so much to the outer defences, that we have not been in a condition to give full play to the energies of the inward life. This is the problem to which Christian statesmen should hereafter direct their efforts.

5. This day is a day of *prayer*, as well as of humiliation and confession. There are blessings which in our present circumstances we urgently need, and we should make them the burden of importunate supplications. The first is the grace of magnanimity, that our moderation may be known unto all men. By moderation, I do not mean tameness and servility of spirit; and by magnanimity, I do not mean what Aristotle seems to understand by it—a consciousness of worth which feels itself entitled to great rewards. The true notion of it is a just sense of what is due to the dignity of the State, and an humble reliance upon God to make it equal to every occasion. The mind that feels the responsibility of its spiritual endowments and aims at the perfection of its nature in the consummation of an end which satisfies the fulness of its being, while it arrogates nothing of merit to itself, but ascribes all its capacities to the unmerited bounties of God; the mind that is conscious of what is due to mind, and intent upon fulfilling its own idea—is truly great; and the more thoroughly it is penetrated with this consciousness, the more deeply it is humbled under the conviction of its manifold shortcomings, and the more earnest in its cries for grace to enable it to win the prize. To know our true place in the universe, to feel that we are possessed of noble powers, and that we are bound to pursue an end that is worthy of them, is not pride, but sobriety of judgment. Pride emerges when we attribute to ourselves the excellence of our gifts; when we cherish a spirit of independence and self-sufficiency, and rob God of the glory

which is due to His bounty. Humility is not a confession that mind is intrinsically little: it is only the conviction of its absolute dependence upon God, and of its relative nothingness when compared with Him. A Commonwealth is magnanimous when it comprehends the vocation of a State, when it rises to the dignity of its high functions, and seeks to cherish a spirit in harmony with the great moral purposes it was ordained to execute. A magnanimous State cannot be the victim of petty passions. It is superior to rashness, to revenge, to irritation and caprice. It has an ideal which it aims to exemplify; cultivates a mind upon a level with its calling, and, turning neither to the right nor to the left, presses with undeviating step to the goal before it. It is calm, collected, self-possessed, resolved. It dares do all that may become a State. It will attempt nothing more; it will be content with nothing less. That we, as a Commonwealth, in the trying circumstances in which we are placed, may be able to exhibit this spectacle of magnanimity to the world; that we may command its admiration by the dignity and self-respect of our bearing, even though we should not secure its assent to the wisdom of our policy; that we may make all men see and feel that we are actuated by principle, and not by passion—should be a subject of our fervent supplications this day. Wisdom and courage are the inspiration of God.

In the next place, we should look to Him to raise up for us, as guides and leaders in the present emergency, men of counsel and understanding. Statesmen in the State, as Apostles in the Church, are special ministers of God. They arise at His bidding, and execute His behests. Moses and Joshua, Solon and Lycurgus, the Prince of Orange and Washington, were anointed and commissioned of heaven for the work they so happily performed. To construct a Government of any kind is a work of no ordinary magnitude; but the Government of a free people, with its complicated checks and balances, it is given only to the loftiest minds to be able to conceive, much less to create. If ever there was

a time, since the adoption of the Federal Constitution, when the whole country needed the counsel and guidance of patriotic statesmen, it is now, when, under the lead of demagogues, factions and politicians, we have corrupted every principle of our polity, and brought the Government to the brink of dissolution. No human arm is equal to the crisis. No human eye can penetrate the future. Our only help is in God; from Him alone cometh our salvation. The highest proof of patriotism in the present conjuncture is in penitence and humility to seek His favour, and if it is His purpose to redeem and save us, in answer to our prayers He will cause the men to stand forth, and the people to honour and accept them whom He has commissioned to conduct us through the wilderness. In the meantime, let us scrupulously resist every influence that is unfriendly to the influence of His Spirit. Let us mortify every thought and subdue every passion upon which we cannot sincerely invoke His blessing. If we are to lay the foundations of a new empire, or to readjust the proportions of the old, the only pledge of permanent success is the Divine favour. Happy is that people, and that people alone, whose God is the Lord.

Finally, let us pray that our courage may be equal to every emergency. Even though our cause be just, and our course approved of heaven, our path to victory may be through a baptism of blood. Liberty has its martyrs and confessors, as well as religion. The oak is rooted amid wintry storms. Great truths come to us at great cost, and the most impressive teachers of mankind are those who have sealed their lessons with their blood. Our State may suffer; she may suffer grievously; she may suffer long: Be it so: we shall love her the more tenderly and the more intensely, the more bitterly she suffers. It will not follow, even if she should be destined to fall, that her course was wrong, or her sufferings in vain. Thermopylæ was lost, but the moral power of Thermopylæ will continue as long as valour and freedom have a friend, and reverence for law be one of the noblest

sentiments of the human soul. Let it be our great concern to know God's will. Let *right* and *duty* be our watchword, liberty, regulated by law, our goal; and, leaning upon the arm of everlasting strength, we shall achieve a name, whether we succeed or fail, that posterity will not willingly let die.

RELATION OF THE STATE TO CHRIST.

THE petition of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America, now met and sitting in the city of Augusta, in the State of Georgia, to the Congress of the Confederate States of America, now met and sitting in the city of Richmond, in the State of Virginia, respectfully showeth:

That this Assembly is the supreme judicatory of those Presbyterian churches in the Confederate States which were formerly under the jurisdiction of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States; that it comprises —— Presbyteries, —— Synods, and —— members; that it represents a people devotedly attached to the Confederate cause, and eminently loyal to the Confederate Government. The changes which your honourable body has made in the Constitution of the United States, and which have been ratified and confirmed by the various States of the Confederacy, have received the universal approval of the Presbyterian population of these States; and none have been more grateful to God than themselves for the prudence, caution, moderation, and wisdom which have characterized all your counsels in the arduous task of constructing the new Government. We congratulate you on your success. But, gentlemen, we are constrained, in candour, to say that, in our humble judgment, the Constitution, admirable as it is in other respects, still labours under one capital defect. It is not distinctively Christian. It is not bigotry, but love to our country, and an earnest, ardent desire to promote its permanent well-being, which prompts us to call the attention of your honourable body to this subject, and, in the

way of respectful petition, to pray that the Constitution may be amended so as to express the précise relations which the Government of these States ought to sustain to the religion of Jesus Christ.

The Constitution of the United States was an attempt to realize the notion of popular freedom, without the checks of aristocracy and a throne, and without the alliance of a national Church. The conception was a noble one, but the execution was not commensurate with the design. The fundamental error of our fathers was, that they accepted a partial for a complete statement of the truth. They saw clearly the human side—that popular governments are the offspring of popular will; and that rulers, as the servants and not the masters of their subjects, are properly responsible to them. They failed to apprehend the Divine side—that all just government is the ordinance of God, and that magistrates are His ministers who must answer to Him for the execution of their trust. The consequence of this failure, and of exclusive attention to a single aspect of the case, was to invest the people with a species of supremacy as insulting to God as it was injurious to them. They became a law unto themselves; there was nothing beyond them to check or control their caprices or their pleasure. All were accountable to them; they were accountable to none. This was certainly to make the people a God; and if it was not explicitly expressed that they could do no wrong, it was certainly implied that there was no tribunal to take cognizance of their acts. A foundation was thus laid for the worst of all possible forms of government—a democratic absolutism, which, in the execution of its purposes, does not scruple to annul the most solemn compacts and to cancel the most sacred obligations. The will of majorities must become the supreme law, if the voice of the people is to be regarded as the voice of God; if they are, in fact, the only God whom rulers are bound to obey. It is not enough, therefore, to look upon government as simply the institute of man. Important as this aspect of the subject unquestionably is, yet

if we stop there, we shall sow the seeds of disaster and failure. We must contemplate people and rulers as alike subject to the authority of God. His will is the true supreme; and it is under Him, and as the means of expressing His sovereign pleasure, that conventions are called, constitutions are framed and governments erected. To the extent that the State is a moral person, it must needs be under moral obligation, and moral obligation without reference to a superior will is a flat contradiction in terms. If, then, the State is an ordinance of God, it should acknowledge the fact. If it exists under the conditions of a law superior to all human decrees, and to which all human decrees behove to be conformed, that law should be distinctly recognized. Let us guard, in this new Confederacy, against the fatal delusion that our government is a mere expression of human will. It is, indeed, an expression of *will*, but of will regulated and measured by those eternal principles of right which stamp it at the same time as the creature and institute of God. And of all governments in the world, a confederate government, resting as it does upon plighted faith, can least afford to dispense with the supreme Guardian of treaties.

Your honourable body has already, to some extent, rectified the error of the old Constitution, but not so distinctly and clearly as the Christian people of these States desire to see done. We venture respectfully to suggest, that it is not enough for a State which enjoys the light of Divine revelation to acknowledge in general terms the supremacy of God; it must also acknowledge the supremacy of His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds. To Jesus Christ all power in heaven and earth is committed. To Him every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess. He is the Ruler of the nations, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Should it be said that the subjection of governments to Jesus Christ is not a relation manifested by reason, and therefore not obligatory on the State, the answer is obvious—that duties spring not from the manner in which the relation

is made known, but from the truth of the relation itself. If the fact is so, that Jesus Christ is our Lord, and we know the fact, no matter how we come to know it, we are bound to acknowledge it, and act upon it. A father is entitled to the reverence of his son, a master to the obedience of his servant, and a king to the allegiance of his subjects, no matter how the relation between them is ascertained. Now, that Jesus Christ is the supreme Ruler of the nations, we know with infallible certainty, if we accept the Scriptures as the Word of God.

But it may be asked—and this is the core of all the perplexity which attends the subject—Has the State any right to accept the Scriptures as the Word of God? The answer requires a distinction, and that distinction seems to us to obviate all difficulty. If by "accepting the Scriptures" it is meant that the State has a right to prescribe them as a rule of faith and practice to its subjects, the answer must be in the negative. The State is lord of no man's conscience. As long as he preserves the peace, and is not injurious to the public welfare, no human power has a right to control his opinion or to restrain his acts. In these matters he is responsible to none but God. He may be Atheist, Deist, infidel, Turk or Pagan: it is no concern of the State, so long as he walks orderly. Its protecting shield must be over him, as over every other citizen. We utterly abhor the doctrine that the civil magistrate has any jurisdiction in the domain of religion, in its relations to the conscience or conduct of others, and we cordially approve the clause in our Confederate Constitution which guarantees the amplest liberty on this subject.

But if by "accepting the Scriptures" it is meant that the State may itself believe them to be true, and regulate its own conduct and legislation in conformity with their teachings, the answer must be in the affirmative. As a moral person, it has a conscience as really and truly as every individual citizen. To say that its conscience is only the aggregate of individual consciences, is to say that it is made up

of conflicting and even contradictory elements. The State condemns many things which many of its subjects approve, and enjoins many things which many of its subjects condemn. There are those who are opposed to the rights of property and the institution of marriage, yet the public conscience sanctions and protects them both. What, then, is this public conscience? It is clearly the sum of those convictions of right, that sense of the honourable, just and true, which legislators feel themselves bound to obey in the structure of governments and the enactment of laws. It is a reflection of the law of God; and when that law is enunciated with authoritative clearness, as it is in the Scriptures, it becomes only the more solemnly imperative. And as the eternal rule of justice, the State should acknowledge it. Considered in its organic capacity as a person, it no more violates the rights of others in submitting itself to the revealed will of God, than a Christian, when he worships the supreme Jehovah, violates the rights of an Atheist or idolater. What the State does itself, and what it enjoins upon others to do, are very different things. It has an organic life apart from the aggregate life of the individuals who compose it; and in that organic life, it is under the authority of Jesus Christ and the restraints of His holy Word.

That, in recognizing this doctrine, the State runs no risk of trespassing upon the rights of conscience is obvious from another point of view. The will of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, is not a positive Constitution for the State; in that relation it stands only to the Church. It is rather a negative check upon its power. It does not prescribe the things to be done, but only forbids the things to be avoided. It only conditions and restrains the discretion of rulers within the bounds of the Divine law. It is, in other words, a limitation, and not a definition, of power. The formula according to which the Scriptures are accepted by the State is: Nothing shall be done which they forbid. The formula according to which they are accepted by the Church is:

Nothing shall be done but what they enjoin. They are here the positive measure of power. Surely the government of no Christian people can scruple to accept the negative limitations of the Divine Word. Surely, our rulers do not desire that they shall have the liberty of being wiser than God.

The amendment which we desire, we crave your honourable body to take note, does not confine the administration of the State exclusively to the hands of Christian men. A Jew might be our Chief Magistrate, provided he would come under the obligation to do nothing in the office inconsistent with the Christian religion. He would not be required to say that he himself believes it, nor would he assume the slightest obligation to propagate or enforce it. All that he would do would be to acknowledge it as the religion of the State, and to bind himself that he will sanction no legislation that sets aside its authority. The religion of the State is one thing; the religion of the individuals who may happen to be at the head of affairs is quite another. The religion of the State is embodied in its Constitution, as the concrete form of its organic life.

Your honourable body will perceive that the contemplated measure has no reference to a union or alliance betwixt the Church and the State. To any such scheme the Presbyterians, and, we think we can safely venture to say, the entire Christian people of these States, are utterly opposed. The State, as such, cannot be a member, much less, therefore, can it exercise the function of settling the creed and the government, of a Church. The provinces of the two are entirely distinct: they differ in their origin, their nature, their ends, their prerogatives, their powers and their sanctions. They cannot be mixed or confounded without injury to both. But the separation of Church and State is a very different thing from the separation of religion and the State. Here is where our fathers erred. In their anxiety to guard against the evils of a religious establishment, and to preserve the provinces of Church and State separate and distinct,

they virtually expelled Jehovah from the government of the country, and left the State an irresponsible corporation, or responsible only to the immediate corporators. They made it a moral person, and yet not accountable to the Source of all law. It is this anomaly which we desire to see removed; and the removal of it by no means implies a single element of what is involved in a national Church.

The amendment which this General Assembly ventures respectfully to crave we have reason to believe is earnestly desired, and would be hailed as an auspicious omen by the overwhelming majority of the Christian people of these Confederate States. Is it not due to them that their consciences, in the future legislation of the country, should be protected from all that has a tendency to wound or grieve them? They ask no encroachments upon the rights of others. They simply crave that a country which they love should be made yet dearer to them, and that the Government which they have helped to frame they may confidently commend to their Saviour and their God, under the cheering promise that those who honour Him He will honour. Promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South. God is the ruler among the nations; and the people who refuse Him their allegiance shall be broken with a rod of iron, or dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel. Our republic will perish like the Pagan republics of Greece and Rome, unless we baptize it into the name of Christ. "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth; kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little." We long to see, what the world has never yet beheld, a truly Christian Republic, and we humbly hope that God has reserved it for the people of these Confederate States to realize the grand and glorious idea. God has wooed us by extraordinary goodness; He is now tempering us by gentle chastisements. Let the issue be the penitent submission of this great people at the footstool of His Son.

The whole substance of what we desire may be expressed

in the following or equivalent terms, to be added to the section providing for liberty of conscience:

Nevertheless we, the people of these Confederate States, distinctly acknowledge our responsibility to God, and the supremacy of His Son, Jesus Christ, as King of kings and Lord of lords; and hereby ordain that no law shall be passed by the Congress of these Confederate States inconsistent with the will of God, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

THE SCRIBE INSTRUCTED.

"Then said He unto them: Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."—MATT. xiii. 52.

THE design of our Saviour in these words was to illustrate the character of a Minister of the Gospel. He was addressing, as South quaintly but justly intimates, a Seminary of preachers, or rather a kind of itinerant academy; and the instruction given in the comparison before us was rendered still more impressive by the example of the varied provisions which He Himself had furnished in the discourse which it closes. The scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is evidently a Preacher of the Gospel. Among the Jews, there was a twofold office bearing this designation—the first civil, equivalent to notary or secretary or clerk; the other ecclesiastical, equivalent to doctor or teacher of the law. It indicates especially one educated, learned in the law. *The kingdom of heaven* here means the doctrines of the Gospel. "Now we are to take notice that it was the way of Christ, in His preaching to the Jews, to express the offices and things belonging to His Church under the Gospel, by alluding to those of the Jewish Church under the law, as being known and familiar to them. Hence He calls a Minister, or preacher of the Gospel, *a scribe;* and this from the analogy of what the scribe did in the explication of the Mosaic law, with what the Gospel Minister was to do in preaching and pressing home the doctrines of Christianity upon the heart and conscience."[1]

Instructed,—schooled or disciplined to the work. It im-

[1] South, vol. iii., p. 6.

plies a preparation of laborious study. His qualifications were the result not of inspiration, not of sudden or miraculous infusion, but of diligence, application and thought. The scribe of the law was trained to his office; so the Gospel Minister must be *trained* to his office. Thus much certainly is intimated by the very word *scribe*, and particularly does it intimate a thorough knowledge of the sacred text. The Scribes were specially charged with transcribing the sacred books, and they were required to have a critical knowledge of their contents. The similitude of the householder represents the skill and ability with which every Minister should accommodate himself to the varying wants and conditions of his hearers and of his age. The householder has provisions for all seasons, for all palates, for all hours. The "new and the old" are expressions for copiousness and variety. So the Minister is to be fully furnished for the wants of his age with things new and old—a copious variety of learning—and the storehouse must be his mind and not his library, his head and not his shelves.

We are to guard against the supposition that the reference is to novelties in doctrine. The householder never could, without changing the constitution of man and the nature of things, present any new kinds of nutriment; but the same elements might be found in various combinations, and new forms might be invented of serving them up. So the doctrines of the Gospel, the real *pabulum animi*, like their Divine Master, remain always unchanged, the same yesterday, to-day and forever; but the modes of illustrating, enforcing and impressing them may vary with the tastes, genius and learning of men. The wants of one age are not the wants of another, and the Christian literature of one time may not be adapted to the exigencies of another. The Minister is always to be fitted for his age. He is to be able to carry forward the Gospel amid all the changes and vicissitudes of society and opinion. He is to be able to commend the doctrines of Christ to all tastes and to all consciences. This is what he is to aim at, to be like a house-

holder, with a treasure always furnished and ready for every emergency. But how is he to do it? In other words, what are the qualifications which fit a man to discharge comfortably and profitably the solemn functions of the ministry? To this point I propose to confine myself to-night.

I. The first thing required is a *sound* mind. There are two things, apart from the want of piety, which the Constitution of our Church seems particularly to guard against in the selection of its Ministers—weakness and ignorance. Is a man *weak?* That settles the question—he is not fit to be a Minister. But what is our standard of weakness? It is evidently the average capacity of the race. What falls below that is likely to provoke ridicule and contempt. The world can endure anything better than a fool. Now the capacities of men vary greatly, but there is an average degree of talent which practically it is not difficult to ascertain. But something more is required in a *sound* mind. It is the proportion and balance of its faculties. Any undue preponderance of any one power is to be deprecated. Our apprehensive faculties, our retentive faculties, our faculties of comparison and reflection—our intellectual powers—should not be held in abeyance by our feelings and emotions. It is the relative proportion in which the powers of the mind exist that constitutes health. Eccentricities of mind should be scrupulously kept out of the ministry. Physical deformity precluded a descendant of Aaron from serving at the altar, and mental deformity should preclude a man from the pulpit. He should have no hobbies. The Scriptures justify these statements in exacting of Ministers that they should not be objects of contempt, that they should possess sobriety and gravity of mind, and that they should be apt to teach. They must be men who can command respect, and not buffoons or mountebanks.

II. They must be *educated* men. It will probably be admitted on all hands that a Minister ought not to be a fool, but it is not so generally conceded that he ought to be one

who has enjoyed the advantages of a liberal education. I would not be understood as insisting on a *learned* ministry; that is a sheer impossibility. The majority of no profession can be expected to occupy the front ranks of excellence, and learning is a jewel which few have the means, fewer still the opportunities, of acquiring. The probability is, that there are not half a dozen learned men in the United States of America—men, I mean, of profound and varied erudition, men like Selden, Leibnitz and Owen. This is one advantage of Seminaries, that they furnish a supply of higher instruction; they give us men above the general level, men devoted to particular departments of study. But what I mean by an *educated* man is one who has had the mental discipline which a course of liberal studies imparts. There are three effects of a liberal education: 1. Enlargement of the mind—the mystery of growth. 2. The formation of habits—of apprehension, thought, attention. The nature of these habits will depend altogether upon the mode of intellectual exercise. 3. The acquisition of knowledge, especially of fundamental knowledge. These are the results of a liberal education. All may be resolved into the effects of exercise, and the advantage of a liberal education is that it directs this exercise systematically and judiciously. There is always some irregularity in the mental conformations of a self-taught man.

III. This is all preliminary. There must also be distinctively a professional education which gives the knowledge. The preliminary education fits up the store-room; the professional education fills it with provisions. The great departments are Sacred Criticism, History and Theology.

IV. The reasons for an educated ministry:

1. The example of Christ. He gave the Apostles supernaturally the habits which come to us by discipline. He gave them by inspiration the professional knowledge.

2. The requisition of *aptness to teach*. This is the Minister's office, and a noble office it is; it is alms to the soul,

eyes to the blind. It requires a rare discipline, clearness of thought, vigour of apprehension and vivacity of expression.

But it is said, any one who has been converted can explain the way of salvation—he has but to copy his own experiences. But nothing is harder than to reproduce in reflection the spontaneous processes of the soul, or to separate the accidental from the essential. None but a man of the highest order of mind can be an experimental preacher. The most of us dare not attempt it. I never knew but one man who was fully successful in it, and even he was afraid to touch certain departments of Christian experience.

3. The nature of the case. Theology is a science of interpretation.

(1.) We must know what the Bible is. (2.) We must enter into the age of the different writers. (3.) We must generalize and arrange.

4. The injunction, *Let no man despise thee.* The minister must be on a level with his age. We are not to expose ourselves to contempt by ignorance and folly.

To conclude:

1. Be not hasty to buckle on the harness. The standard of attainment is unfortunately too low, and every man has felt, after being in the ministry awhile, that it would be a great privilege to be allowed to go to school once more. No learning is useless. We can lay all nature under tribute in our sacred calling.

2. The hardest part of discipline must be done by ourselves. Everything depends on the nature of the exercise. Intense thought is required. Loose habits of reading, loose habits of thinking, loose habits of expression are to be guarded against, especially the delusion that we have ideas which we cannot express, or general knowledge. Do nothing inaccurately.

3. Make all your knowledge habitual. This renders it permanent—a part of the man. The habit will remain when particular facts are forgotten.

THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

"By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name."—ROM. i. 5.

THE permanent features of the apostolic office were the same as those of the ministerial office at the present day. All that was peculiar has passed away, and there is not a shadow of foundation in the Word of God for the prelatical opinion that in their peculiar duties the Twelve could be followed by successors.[1] To have seen Christ with the natural eye was an indispensable prerequisite for discharging the distinctive duties of the apostleship. They were in an

[1] What were the peculiar and distinctive functions of the apostleship? The word itself gives us no clue to its scriptural application to a particular class of men. 1. It was necessary that the Apostles should have seen Christ with their bodily eyes, for they were to be eye-witnesses of His resurrection. Acts i. 22, ii. 32, iii. 15; 1 Cor. ix. 1, xv. 15. 2. They were to organize the Christian Church. It is affirmed of it that it is "built upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets." Eph. ii. 20. "And keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you." 1 Cor. xi. 2. Also verse 34: "And the rest will I set in order when I come." 3. As founders of the Christian Church they were vested with extraordinary powers for the purpose of confirming the Divine authority of their commission. These appear to have been the peculiarities of the apostolic office as separate from the ordinary duties of the ministry.

Have the Apostles any successors in their office? This question must be answered in the negative for the following reasons: 1. No one on earth now has ever seen Christ. 2. No one is invested with miraculous powers. 3. The duties in which it is supposed the Apostles had successors are not mentioned in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, which contains the institution of the ministry that was to last till the end of the world. The hypothesis of three orders in the ministry is, therefore, a mere fiction, and opposed to the whole spirit of the Gospel. 4. It can be shown how Prelacy arose from Presbytery, but it never can be shown how Presbytery arose from Prelacy.—*MS. Lecture on Colossians, by the Author.*

eminent sense the witnesses of his resurrection, and in order to bear an adequate testimony to this important fact they were required to have the best of all evidence, that of their own senses. Hence Paul, in vindicating his claims to this office, rests them upon the fact that he had seen Christ. "Am I not an Apostle? am I not free? *have I not seen Jesus Christ* our Lord"? While, therefore, the peculiar functions of the apostleship ceased with those who had been the eye-witnesses of our Saviour's resurrection, we have reason to thank God that, in the solemn and important duties of the ministry, the twelve are now followed and will be followed by successors to the end of time. Hence the language of the text is just as appropriate to Ministers of the present day as it was to the Apostles in the infancy of the Church. "By whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name." In these words we have the authority, the immediate end, and the ultimate design, of the Christian ministry.

A brief exposition of these points, with a few reflections naturally arising from them, will fill up the scope of the present discourse.

I. The authority of the Christian ministry. That this office is a Divine institution, that it rests upon the authority of God, is amply sustained by the testimony of Scripture. This is the appointed channel through which the saving doctrines of the Gospel are to flow out upon the world. "For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." "And He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

That the ministerial office was designed to be permanent

seems to be a necessary inference from the ascending commission of our Saviour. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." It would be difficult to conceive how the doctrines of the cross could be widely and successfully and faithfully disseminated without such an office in the Church. If we depended altogether on the press for the inculcation and enforcement of Divine truth, the probability is that few would read and fewer still would obey the holy commands of the Saviour. "Faith comes by hearing," and hearing supposes a living Minister.

Such is the repugnance of the carnal heart to the "things of the Spirit of God" that it will not attend to them unless they are forced on its attention by constant and reiterated efforts. Sinners hate the truth and will not come to it, and would willingly and gladly live in a total ignorance of it, and yet their eternal all depends upon a cordial acceptance and hearty approbation of the truth as it is in Christ. There must be men, therefore, set apart to hold it up before them, to enforce its claims with all the solemn sanctions of eternity, and to persuade sinners by all the tender and awful considerations of the Gospel to receive Christ. There must be Christian Ministers, clothed with Divine authority and commissioned to go forth among the rebellious sons of men and to urge upon their acceptance the gratuitous offer of life. There must be men to warn the guilty of their danger, to point the mourner to the source of consolation, and to stand and plead for God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. The ministerial office is a necessary, an indispensable one. It is the appointed means by which a knowledge of the Saviour is kept up and diffused among men, and we cannot conceive the awful spiritual gloom which would cover the world if all the watchmen on the walls of Zion were to lay down their trumpets and

cease to lift up their voices for God and for eternity. We conclude, therefore, that the ministerial office is "not of men neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead." "By whom (that is, by Christ) we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name."

II. The immediate end which the ministry should have in view is here termed *obedience to the faith.*

Faith may, in this connection, mean either the whole Gospel or that particular feature of the Gospel which relates to justification. The two ideas are intimately associated. A true, justifying, saving faith will always be followed by the fruits of holiness; so that obedience to the faith in the point of justifying righteousness will insure an obedience to the Gospel in all its requirements. The object of the Christian Minister is, therefore, to persuade men to be reconciled to God through Christ, to persuade them to accept of the blessed Saviour in all His offices, and to rest upon Him and Him alone for "wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption." He is to know nothing among his people "but Christ Jesus and Him crucified," and he is to "travail in birth for them until Christ be formed in them" the hope of glory; "until they be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; until, being rooted and grounded in love, they may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fullness of God." The Minister is sent into a world at enmity with God, in a state of rebellion against His rightful authority and under His wrath and curse. The business of the Minister, thus commissioned and sent forth, is to hold up Christ before these rebels as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." He is to labour for the destruction of their enmity against God, for their cordial submission to His authority and for the restoration of the Divine image upon their hearts. He goes among men spiritually dead,

and his errand is to bring them to life. He goes among men sporting on the brink of a burning precipice, and his business is to warn them to flee from the wrath to come. He goes among sinners, lost, helpless and undone, and his work is to free them from the power of sin and from its tremendous doom. The language of the Apostle is strong; it is *obedience* to the faith among all nations for His name. The duties of the Gospel Minister are solemn and momentous; they are not a routine of idle services designed only to while away the hours of the Sabbath, but his business is to see that men *obey* the Gospel. It is not enough that they know its truths and acknowledge its doctrines, but they must surrender their whole hearts to the Saviour and govern their lives by His holy instructions. Every thought must be brought in captivity to the obedience of Christ. Lofty imaginations must be cast down, self-righteousness destroyed and God become all in all. The Gospel will prove a savour of death unto death if it be not cordially received and cheerfully obeyed. In vain the Saviour died, and offered a sacrifice for the sins of His people, and brought in an everlasting righteousness on their behalf, if they be not influenced to receive Him as their Prophet, Priest and King. Obedience to the faith is indispensable to salvation, and if the Minister is anxious that sinners be saved he must be equally solicitous that they obey the truth. Let him remember, then, that he has a distinct and definite end in view—an end which he should never forget, for which he should always toil. Let him remember that sinners cannot be saved without obedience to the faith, and that he, as the ambassador of Christ, has received grace and apostleship for the purpose of accomplishing this high end as an humble instrument in the hands of God.

III. The ultimate design of the Gospel ministry is the glory of God. Men are rendered obedient to the faith "*for His name.*"

The Gospel glorifies God by the strong light which it throws upon His character and government, and all who

obey the Gospel are monuments erected to the praise of the glory of His grace, while all who reject it—vessels of wrath fitted to destruction—make known His power and declare His eternal justice. The brightest exhibition of the Divine character is found in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the clearest illustration of the Divine attributes is reflected from Mount Calvary. If the Gospel gives glory to God, surely the ministry, the means of making it known, must glorify God too. Hence the Apostle says, "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death, to the other the savour of life unto life." God acts in all things with a reference to His own glory, and in the fact that His own glory consists in the excellence of His infinite perfections we have the strongest assurance that in all things the Lord of all the earth will do right. Should we suppose for a moment—and I would not for the world harbour the supposition—should we suppose that His counsels were controlled by any other end, we could not have the same security for the wise and equitable government of the world. But it is a precious, a delightful truth, that "by Him are all things, for Him are all things, to Him are all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Having now briefly pointed out the authority, immediate end and ultimate design of the ministry, I proceed to draw a few inferences which naturally arise from these points.

1. If the ministry rests upon Divine authority, the authority of Christ, no man may take this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God. Hence the Apostles are always explicit in stating that they received their commission from above. Paul was "called to be an Apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God," "called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God;" and the Prophets, Evangelists and Teachers, it is more than insinuated, derived their commission from God. It is daring presumption for any man to intrude himself into the sacred office

who has not been called to it by the Holy Ghost. It rests with God, and with God alone, to designate the men who shall preach the Gospel of His Son. He calls them to their work by the operations of His Spirit on their hearts, impresses upon them a deep conviction of duty, and excites in their breasts corresponding desires to promote His glory in the Gospel of Christ. If men engage in the ministry from the influences of such motives as cannot be ascribed to the Holy Spirit, they incur a fearful guilt in the sight of God by assuming to themselves His exclusive prerogative.

2. How fearful is the guilt of those who reject the message of an authorized ambassador! He comes from God; he speaks with Divine authority, and to reject his message is to treat the Saviour with contempt. If our blessed Redeemer has identified Himself with the meanest of His followers, and regards the wrongs inflicted upon them as wrongs inflicted upon Himself, how surely will He make common cause with His Ministers and treat all the despisers of them and their message as despisers of Himself. When a Minister of the Gospel beseeches sinners to turn from the error of their ways it is God who does it by him, and to disregard the warning of the Minister is to despise God. "Now, then, we are ambassadors of Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Oh it is a solemn thing to hear a Gospel sermon from the lips of a Gospel Minister! It is an awful thing to despise God in the person of His ambassadors! "Take heed, therefore, how ye hear." Hear as from God, hear as for eternity.

3. If the immediate end of the Gospel ministry is "obedience to the faith," the Minister should always have his attention fixed definitely upon this end. It is to be regretted that too much of ministerial labour is functionary. The ambassadors of God too often forget their high aim, and proclaim His message without the least expectation of success in their work. They preach because they are required to preach; the Sabbath has arrived and they must while

away an hour from the pulpit because the people expect it. This is a dreadful state of things. My ministering brethren, let us always remember that sinners must be eternally damned unless they obey the Gospel; let us preach for life and death; let us move heaven and earth in the great commotion; preach for the saving of souls, for the glory of God. Our work is not done unless sinners do obey the Gospel. To bring about this result is our business, ought to be our constant aim. We should have our eyes singly fixed upon it. We should never preach for the sake of preaching, but always for the sake of obedience. One great reason why we meet with so little success is that we do not expect success. Often it would surprise us to be told that sinners were cut to the heart under our ministry. I repeat it, too much of our labour is merely functionary—a dry matter of course. This was not the spirit in which Paul laboured. He received his commission for a specific object, and that object, in deep reliance on the Holy Spirit, he endeavoured to accomplish. Let us remember, then, that we have "received grace and apostleship *for obedience to the faith* among all nations for His name;" that "in Christ's stead we must beseech sinners to be reconciled to God."

4. If we would bring about obedience to the faith, fidelity in preaching the truth is indispensably necessary.

A faithful preacher is one who preaches the whole truth in its proper connection and dependence, and in a style and manner suited to the capacities of his hearers. No truth of God is valueless, and that man who fails to declare the whole counsel of God is recreant to his trust. The doctrines of the Gospel are humbling to the pride of the human heart, but they must be faithfully proclaimed whether the people will cordially receive them or not. This is a day of heresy; unfaithful ministers have corrupted the truth of God; the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel have been robbed of their peculiarities in order to suit them to the carnal mind. But such abominable temporizing is unworthy of a Minister of the everlasting Gospel. He must preach

the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It is this which God employs in awakening and converting the sinner and in the sanctification of His people; and it is the bounden duty of a Minister to see to it that His people are well instructed in the great principles of the Gospel. And let him always remember that the burden of the Scriptures is Christ crucified. The blessed Saviour in his work and offices must be held up before them as the object of their faith and their only Saviour. Moses, in the Law and the Prophets, wrote of Him; of Him do the Scriptures testify, and the sum and substance of the Gospel is Christ "our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption."

But it is not only necessary to preach the whole truth; it must be preached in its proper connection and dependence. Much injury may be done by presenting the truths of the Bible in a detached and isolated form. For instance, the Divine sovereignty may be so preached as to lead to fatalism and the moral agency of man in such a manner as to lead to Pelagianism.

But fidelity also implies plainness and simplicity. There are some men who enter the desk only to show themselves, to gratify their vanity in the applause of their hearers, and to exhibit their learning and fine attainments at the peril of their own souls and the souls of their people. These men we always expect to find preaching in buskins. But he who preaches for the salvation of souls, for obedience to the faith, must labour to be understood by the meanest of his hearers. They cannot obey unless they understand what they are required to obey. He is sent to teach them, and what sort of instruction is that which is couched in language beyond the reach of their capacity? He might as well talk in Latin or Greek as speak in a style of which they are not masters. How different was the manner of Paul: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God." "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in

demonstration of the Spirit and of power." It is reported of Archbishop Tillotson that he uniformly read his sermons to an old woman in the neighbourhood, before he preached them, in order that he might ascertain whether he had used any words which the meanest of his people could not comprehend.

Fidelity implies, besides, that a Minister's instructions be peculiarly suited to the wants of his people. Preaching, to be powerful, must be direct, and it cannot be direct when it is unsuited to the state of the people. It is this directness in preaching which has caused many sinners to tremble under the truth, and led them to suspect that their Minister had some secret means of ascertaining their characters and state. This is one great secret of success in the ministry, and without it a man is shooting in the dark. The epistles of Paul exhibit in a remarkable degree this feature of directness. He shows himself intimately acquainted with the wants of the churches to which he writes, and his exhortations and advice and instructions are eminently suited to their respective states. "Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant whom his lord hath made ruler over His household to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord when He cometh shall find so doing."

5. It need hardly be remarked that earnestness is a necessary feature of successful preaching. At the bar and in the Senate chamber we find men deeply interested and heartily engaged in the cause which they have espoused, while in the house of God the melancholy spectacle of coldness and indifference on subjects of eternal concern is too frequently exhibited. There are men so scrupulously careful of correctness and decorum, that it would almost seem that they would sooner sacrifice a soul than commit a blunder in grammar or perpetrate an awkward gesture. How can a Minister who feels the value of the soul, or the realities of eternity, be cold and unmoved when warning sinners to flee from the wrath to come? Heaven or hell, life or death, eternal life or eternal death, depend on the success of his

message, and can he be indifferent whether it is received or not? Can he see the terrible cloud of Divine wrath gathering thick above the sinner's head ready to beat in one tremendous storm upon him and not be in earnest in warning him of danger? Eternity is at stake! The Minister must be earnest; if he has the soul and feelings of a Christian he must be earnest. The law thunders in terrific peals its notes of condemnation; the Saviour groans and dies and meets its demands; yet the sinner is asleep—asleep on the very brink of hell, and who will awake him? Sinai and Calvary alike urge the Minister to be earnest; he must lift his voice like a trumpet until the sinner hears his warning and obeys his instructions. Isaiah was in earnest, Paul was in earnest, all the faithful Ministers of Christ must be in earnest. There is too much at stake to trifle here. The soul, the soul, the immortal soul is deeply concerned, and who can think of the tremendous realities of the eternal world without strong emotion, or discuss the question of life and death as dryly and coldly as a question in philosophy?

6. Much of the success of the Gospel depends on the personal character of the Minister himself. He must be a *pious* man. Grace and apostleship are joined together by the apostle in my text, and ought always to be inseparable companions. He must experience deeply in his own heart those solemn truths which he preaches to others. He must be a man of prayer. The Holy Spirit alone can give saving efficacy to the truths of the Gospel, and the Holy Spirit is ordinarily bestowed in answer to prayer. A Minister should live upon his knees; he should bear his people as his own children to a throne of grace, and his sermons ought to be carried from the closet to the desk. He must lay the state of his people before God; he must plead with God for them and leave them in God's hands. And oh, what a precious privilege is this! "Alleluia! the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

The Minister must also be a man of deep humility. He must feel his own nothingness and vileness and his entire dependence upon Divine aid. The Apostle Paul gloried in his infirmities that the grace of Christ might be magnified. When he was weak then was he strong, when he was poor then was he rich, that Christ might be all in all. Just in proportion as a Minister feels that he is nothing, and that the whole success of his ministry depends upon grace, just in the same proportion will be his earnest supplications for the Holy Spirit. He will regard himself as only an instrument of God in the conversion of sinners, and his eyes will always be "directed to the hill whence all his help must come." Spiritual pride and spiritual self-sufficiency are formidable barriers to ministerial success, and the man who depends upon his own eloquence or skill or learning to do the work of grace will find at last that "vain is the help of man" "whose breath is in his nostrils." There is need, then, of deep humility and correspondent dependence on Divine aid if a Minister would secure among his people obedience to the faith. The work is God's; He must have the glory, and if we trust to ourselves and go forward in our own unassisted strength, He may justly give us up to lying delusions and a reprobate mind. "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and stay on horses and trust in chariots, because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord." Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God alone can give the increase. "So, then, neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase."

Yet there is a deep personal responsibility imposed upon the Minister, and, if he would be successful in his work, he must feel the weight that rests upon him. "So, thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not

speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul." If a Minister has any adequate sense of the value of the soul which in some sense is committed to him, of the tremendous retributions of the eternal world, the intolerable severity of the wrath of God, he must feel an awful burden resting on his shoulders. He has in his hands the words of eternal life; the people look to him for spiritual guidance and instruction, and if any perish through lack of knowledge their blood will be required at his hands. He sees men dead, and he is the instrument to raise them to life; he sees the awful tempest of Divine wrath bursting upon them, and he must warn them of their danger; he sees them in a state of stubborn rebellion against God and His government, the slaves of passion, appetite and lust, and he, under God, must break the charm, bring them back to allegiance, and present them perfect, washed and sanctified before the presence of his Father. Ah, well may we exclaim with the apostle, "Who is sufficient for these things?" A word or look may stab the Saviour in the house of His friends, and seriously affect the state of the ungodly. The responsibilities of the Minister are so awfully perilous that none could be found, who entertained proper views of its duties, to assume the office without the strongest assurances of Divine aid.

He must feed the flock with the bread of God's Word, with His holy and eternal truth; and oh what a fearful thing it is to preach philosophy and vain deceit when his commission requires the Gospel of Christ! Who can dare, in view of eternity and the bar of God, to preach himself instead of his Master, and to deal out his own devices in lieu of the oracles of God? Let the Minister feel his responsibility as he should feel it, and he will be found very careful as to what he preaches and how he preaches.

He will then know nothing but Christ Jesus and Him crucified, the wisdom of God and the power of God for salvation to every one that believeth.

7. If the grand design of the Gospel is the glory of God, it is quite certain that this must be an object dear to the Minister's heart. He should desire that sinners should embrace the Gospel as well for the glory of his Master as for their own salvation. Unbelief casts a slur upon the Divine character, and it must be a subject of deep solicitude to one who loves the law and government of God to find men in rebellion against Him. This trait of ministerial character is beautifully portrayed in the person of Elijah. "I have been very jealous," says he, "for the Lord God of hosts, for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life to take it away." His chief concern was for the honour of God; he was very jealous for the Lord God of hosts, and was deeply grieved that the children of Israel had abandoned His worship. The Gospel does glorify God; every repenting sinner glorifies God with the cheerful tribute of his heart, and will add one more to the host of the redeemed who cease not, day nor night, to ascribe glory and honour and power and dominion to the Lamb that sitteth on the throne for ever and ever.

8. The work of the ministry must occupy the Minister's undivided attention. He must be free from worldly cares and secular pursuits. The duties of his office are arduous and responsible; they require an intimate acquaintance with his people, communion with God, and patient and laborious study. He cannot discharge them faithfully and successfully if he finds it necessary to add to them the harassing burden of a farm or a school. The great duty of pastoral visitation, which renders him familiar with the wants of his people, must be omitted if his time in the week is taken up with the business of a secular avocation, and even his devotions on the Sabbath cannot be single and undi-

vided if his attention has been greatly occupied with worldly pursuits. It is the duty of the people to support their Minister fully and abundantly, and if they discharged it they would find themselves amply repaid in the increased success and richness of his labours. He carries upon his shoulders in the office of the ministry a load which would bear an angel down if unassisted by God, and shall we add to its solemn responsibilities the additional labour of secular pursuits? It is wrong. They that labour at the altar must live by the altar; they who give spiritual things must be supplied with temporal things. They have a right to be supported; it is a matter of sheer justice and not of charity, as the people too commonly suppose. It is a principle distinctly recognized in the Word of God and forcibly inculcated under the Mosaic economy, and the churches cannot abandon it now without the just imputation of guilt.

Such, in a feeble, inadequate view, is the Gospel ministry—a Divine appointment for wise and holy ends. There is abundant ground of gratitude that the "foolishness of preaching" was ever instituted to reclaim a perishing world. Christianity boasts of no splendid rites, no imposing ceremonies, no dazzling institutions; it is by the simple means of a stated ministry that her truths are impressed and her duties enforced. And has not the foolishness of preaching done wonders for the world? Has it not opened the eyes of the blind, unstopped the ears of the deaf, and unloosed the tongues of the dumb? Has it not made sinners tremble at their guilt, and poured into the wounds of the afflicted soul the healing balm of consolation? Let the truth be preached faithfully, plainly, earnestly and humbly by the authorized ambassador of God, and the Holy Spirit will accompany it and give it power on the heart. "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall

accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Success is of God, and the faithful minister has the cheering encouragement that Christ is always with him. Without such encouragement, who could preach? Who would assume the perilous responsibilities of the sacred office if he had not more than human aid and more than human consolation? But the Saviour is with him and a glorious eternity before him. "And round about the throne were four and twenty seats, and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment, and they had on their heads crowns of gold. . . . The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honour and power, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."

APPENDIXES.

APPENDIX A.

ARGUMENT FOR CHURCH-BOARDS:

BY THE REV. THOMAS SMYTH, D.D.

PART FIRST.

Ecclesiastical Boards necessary, and the proposed scheme offered by the objectors altogether untenable and insufficient.

THE tendency of the human mind is to extremes. Man, by his fall, lost that perfection of wisdom, which would ever have preserved him in the middle path, safe from the dangers of latitudinarianism on the one hand, and of ultraism on the other. As it is, we find the human mind like the pendulum, perpetually verging from one extreme to the other.

This tendency is manifested in a very striking manner when the attention has been directed with absorbing interest to some great perversion of truth. When such errors, on whichever side of the line they are found, are sustained by all the force of apparent reason and of persuasive eloquence, and thus call forth in their refutation the utmost powers of intellectual vigour, it is not in human nature to resist that impulse by which the mind is insensibly driven to the opposite extreme.

So has it been in the recent controversies in which our Church has been so warmly engaged. The truth of God as it is contained in the doctrines of His Word, and the purity of those ordinances which have been established in His Church, have been both assailed, and both triumphantly defended. And as the power, with which such opposing views were advocated, has been great, and is still threatening us with a renewed assault, so has it called forth a fiercer and more determined resistance. Every position occupied by the enemy has been reconnoitred, and every possible force brought to bear against them. It is unavoidably necessary that in such an attitude and spirit of hostility, we should be disposed to entrench ourselves on the most opposite grounds. That there should, therefore, be manifested in

some quarters both as it regards doctrine and practice a tendency towards extremes, every reasonable mind must have confidently anticipated. Such a tendency we must regard as the result of that internal pressure by which the spiritual machinery of our Church was impelled when the heavy sea burst upon her, and threatened to impede her onward progress; and which after the storm has subsided, carries her forward with accelerated speed. Viewing it, therefore, as in itself good, and as meaning only good to the Church, there is no occasion for trembling or alarm. Our present duty evidently is to look out calmly upon the present and the future, to make an accurate calculation of our present bearings, to adjust and trim our sails, and in a confident reliance upon the propitious gales of heaven, to press forward in the glorious course before us.

The tendency of which we speak has been especially manifested as it regards our ecclesiastical organizations. These have become the objects of the severest scrutiny, and are now regarded by some with feelings of jealousy and distrust. Rejecting, with conscientious reprobation, the arbitary assumptions of those who would enslave the Church to the despotism of merely voluntary associations, originated and controlled by men beyond the Church, and irresponsible to it, and subject to no immediate and direct control of the Church, these individuals are now found denying to the Church the power of framing such organizations for herself, and denouncing those she has instituted as anti-scriptural, anti-Presbyterian, and dangerous. Thus have these worthy individuals been led by their microscopic examinations into all the evils, actual and possible, connected with Boards and Agencies as found in the system of voluntary associations to impute the same deformities to Boards even when subjected to the entire control and review of our own ecclesiastical judicatories. Hitherto the controversy was between the claims of Boards and Agencies as existing under one or other of these conditions. The question propounded to every conscience was—not whether such means were scriptural and proper in themselves considered, but whether they were more scriptural and expedient when employed by the Church or when controlled by voluntary associations. This and this alone was the dividing line by which the views so strenuously maintained by the opposing parties in our Church were separated.

Both agreed in regarding such missionary operations as imperatively required by the spirit and precept of the Gospel, and as of all-commanding interest and importance. Both agreed in acknowledging the absolute necessity of some instrumentality by which these operations might be carried on. Both agreed that Boards and Agencies were necessary as this instrumentality, so as that without these, in some form, the duty, however plain, could not be discharged. But

they differed, not as to the form or organization of these Boards, but only as to their relations—the one contending for their entire severance from, and the other for their perfect subjection to, the Church. This position, which I regard as important on entering upon this discussion, is fully admitted. "It was not," says the author of the Argument against Boards, "a subject of discussion *how* the Church could most efficiently conduct these matters in her ecclesiastical capacity; by common consent it was admitted that societies or specific organizations for the purpose were indispensably necessary, and the Church felt that she could gain her point and secure the desired oversight and control, by placing the societies or organizations under her own supervision."

It is, then, apparent that the perfect propriety as well as the absolute necessity of Boards and Agencies was unquestioned during the recent agitations of our Church. These things were laid down as first principles, and assumed data from which both parties started in their introductory demonstrations. The wide differences in the results to which these parties were led arose not from any variance in the premises, but from the method by which they arrived at their respective conclusions.

This being so, it is evident that the objections now raised against our system of ecclesiastical organizations are new. They "never occurred to the Church" during all the period of her late faithful contendings. They are, therefore, novel. They have originated with their present authors, and date no farther back than the present time. The doctrine of the Church on this subject was established. That doctrine was never once questioned during the severe and scrutinizing investigations to which this whole subject has been submitted. That doctrine she still upholds, and upholds too as the golden treasure which, at immense price and hazard, she has rescued from her foes. It was one of the prizes of victory for which she struggled. It was one around which her soldiers fought with most resolute bravery, and which, after it had been seized by the enemy, she regained after many a hard encounter. It is, therefore, endeared when by the recollections of the past it is associated with the memory of striving times and noble exploits, while with its recovery, the recollection of the eminent firmness of some who would now restore it to the enemy is sacredly entwined.

Still it is true that this doctrine and this system may be false. Our Church, and these individuals among the rest, may have been short-sighted and mistaken. Grant that this may be so, still the presumption that it is not is irresistibly strong. *Possibly* our Church may have originated this system of means, and persevered in its approval through evil and through good report, and contended earnestly for

the liberty of its full and unrestricted enjoyment, and all this time have been contending for that which is unscriptural, un-Presbyterian and dangerous. All this is possible, but who will say that it is *probable?*

The presumption, then, is against these objections, and it is strongly in favour of that system against which such objections are made. The *onus probandi* is therefore clearly on these objectors. On them lies the burden of proof for the substantiation of each of these positions. They must *prove* that this system is what they thus declare it to be. It is not enough to object or to throw out difficulties. These attach themselves to every doctrine and to every system. They must establish against this system a charge of unscripturality and dangerous opposition to our Standards and to our creed. Nor is this all. These objectors admit with us the absolute necessity of accomplishing that work which these Boards and Agencies are designed to perform. They acknowledge as fully as we do the necessity of the end. Our only difference is as to the *means* by which that end may be best secured. The means we proposed are those already in operation. These means have been sanctioned by adoption, by long trial, and, as is believed, by eminent success. Now it is incumbent on these brethren to show not merely that this means is liable to objection and abuse, or that it has been actually abused in time past. They must make it evident that it necessarily leads to such evils, and that these evils are inseparable from it. They must further provide a system of means by which the end, which, as they allow, MUST BE ATTAINED, can be accomplished. This system of theirs, they must show, is free from all similar difficulties and objections, is not liable to similar abuses, and is in itself scriptural, presbyterial, and expedient. All this our objectors are under obligations to do before they can fairly call upon us to abandon the existing system, and to endanger an end of such necessary and transcendent importance.

If, then, such objectors either propose no substitute whatever for our present system, or one which is of doubtful expediency, it most clearly follows that all their objections, however plausible, fall to the ground, that our present system is to be necessarily retained, and that our Church in abandoning it would be recreant to duty, and justly chargeable with folly. She would leave her ships and disarm her forces because chargeable with some deficiencies, and that, too, while the enemy was in sight, and she was under positive command to put forth to sea and war a good warfare against the powers of darkness.

I will, therefore, proceed to take up the difficulties in the objector's plan, and by showing its untenableness construct a negative argument against his position. It is incumbent upon him to give us some system which will meet all the difficulties of the case, and failing to do

this we are left to conclude that all his objections are vain. The very fact, if it is a fact, that while the necessity of this duty is admitted on the one hand, he utterly fails to provide a system adequate to the wants of the case, is conclusive evidence against him. Allowing, then, the existence of many incidental evils in our existing system, which nevertheless commends itself substantially to a large portion of the Church, we will proceed to show there are difficulties as great, if not actually insurmountable, connected with the proposed substitute.

What, then, I ask, is the case whose difficulties are to be met? It is simply this: The world is given to our Church, in common with others, as a field to be cultivated for the Lord of the harvest. The heathen world is, according to our ability, to be provided with the preaching of the Gospel, and all other things necessary to its full success. The present wants of our own country, also, are to be met, by a continually increasing supply of good and faithful ministers. These claims require for their fulfilment the education of candidates for the sacred office, and the sending forth and sustaining them when ready to enter upon their various fields of labour. For the accomplishment of this work, which is of such evident greatness, the co-operation and assistance of every church is required to supply the men and the means, and in addition to this some Agency by which these men and this means may be disposed of to the best advantage, and by which all the operations involved in carrying out such a plan may be conducted under the most watchful responsibility, and with the greatest possible economy. Let any one for a moment consider the details implied in the prosecution of this entire work; the extent of the field to be overlooked and accurately surveyed, the number of the ministers to be sent forth, the number of candidates to be brought forward; the incalculable difficulties connected with their preparation, the sending forth, the locating, and the supervision of the labourers in the vineyard; the indisposition of our churches to exercise liberality, and yet the absolute necessity of an unfailing supply of means; the wisdom, prudence, and toil involved in the management and outlay of the funds and the daily and hourly demands which are made upon the Church by these innumerable calls from all quarters for immediate direction, assistance, and co-operation. Let any one fairly consider these things in connection with the department of education, or of domestic missions, or of foreign missions, or of publication, or of our seminaries of instruction, and he will at once perceive how vast is the end to be attained, and how wisely adapted must be the means for its attainment. Let it also be remembered that all these claims come upon the Church in every period of the year, at all times, and in urgent demand for their immediate consideration and provision. Let it also be borne in mind that the change of circumstances continually requires a change

in the arrangements of the benevolent operations of the Church. It will be thus most certain and evident that for the wise management of these operations, a permanent body of some kind, entrusted with discretionary powers, is absolutely necessary. If, therefore, as is admitted, the Church is imperatively required to carry forward these enterprises, then are some ecclesiastical bodies separate and distinct from the ordinary courts of the Church not only occasionally and for a short term, but as permanent agencies, indispensably required.

Now, what is the system proposed as a substitute for our existing one? "It has been frequently admitted," says our objector, "that while everything connected with the spiritual aspects of domestic and foreign missions falls appropriately within the province of the Presbytery, there is no adequate arrangement in our Book for conducting the pecuniary matters of the various stations with efficiency and success. This, we apprehend, is a great mistake. In the first place, the Constitution expressly provides that the judicatory sending out any missionary must support him. (*Form of Government*, chap. xviii.) In the second place, the Book provides that our churches should be furnished with a class of officers for the express purpose of attending to the temporal matters of the Church, and these Deacons might be made the collecting agents of the Presbytery in every congregation, and through them the necessary funds could be easily obtained and without expense. For transmission to foreign parts, nothing more would be necessary than simply to employ some extensive merchant in any of our large cities, who for the usual percentage would attend to the whole matter, or a committee of Deacons appointed by the Assembly for the purpose. So far, then, as the collection and disbursement of funds are concerned, our Constitution has made most abundant provisions."

"We know of nothing which more strikingly illustrates the practical wisdom of the Divine provision of Deacons as collecting agents in each congregation than the fact that, after long and mature experience, the American Board has recommended the appointment of similar agents in each congregation contributing to its funds as the most successful method of increasing its resources. Our Book, however, does not confine Deacons to particular congregations. There should be a competent number of them in each particular church, but we insist upon it that Presbyteries, Synods, and the General Assembly should also have Deacons to attend to their pecuniary matters. Those ordained at Jerusalem were not confined to a specific congregation, but acted for the whole college of Apostles. By entrusting all pecuniary matters into the hands of men ordained under solemn sanctions for the purpose, our spiritual courts would soon cease to be what they are to an alarming extent at present—mere corporations for secular

business. If all our Boards were converted into mere benches of Deacons, commissioned only to disburse funds under the direction of the spiritual courts, there would be no serious ground of objection to them, but in their present form they are lords and masters of the whole Church. They are virtually the head of the Church, their will is law, their authority irresistible, and they combine what God has separated, the *purse* and the *keys*."

Such, then, is the system which after a year's agitation of this subject, after the fullest discussion, and the maturest reflection of one of the most capable minds, is to be substituted for our present ecclesiastical organizations. I have given it in his own words and in its full development, and would invite for it the most careful and impartial consideration. Let it be supposed unobjectionable and free from all censure on the ground of its innovating character. Let it be estimated simply in reference to its adaptation to the difficulties of the case. Bring, then, before your mind the outline already given. Contemplate all the interests involved in our missionary enterprises, foreign and domestic; in our education of the youth of our Church who are destined to the sacred ministry; in the preparation and publication of works suited to the wants of our Ministers, churches, and the community at large. And when you have spread out before you these various portions of the one great field of labour which it is the duty of the Church to cultivate, then contrast with the work to be done the means here provided for its accomplishment.

In the first place, none are to be sent out into any department of this field but such as are deputed by some particular judicatory, to which and to which alone they are to look for their support. In the second place, as the instruments for procuring these necessary funds, no other collecting agents are to be allowed than Deacons. In the third place, for the transmission of these funds to foreign parts, nothing more is to be permitted than some extensive merchant in some large city. In the fourth place, as standing bodies, "commissioned only to disburse funds under the direction of the spiritual courts," we are to have "benches of Deacons" instead of our several Boards. In this form, says the objector, "there would be no serious objection to any of our Boards."

I fearlessly stake the issue of this controversy upon the single question—Is this system of means adequate to the wants, or does it in any measure meet the difficulties, of the case? Would any merchant in this mercantile country entrust to such an agency the accomplishment of such ends, involving such interests, and requiring for their management such continual oversight, such deliberative wisdom? Would any sensible and prudent-minded Christian man commit the affairs of our missionary Boards, with their hundreds of employed

missionaries, their numerous churches, and their continually increasing openings for enlarged usefulness; or our Board of Education, with hundreds of young men in its watch and care; or our Board of Publication, with all the responsibilities it involves, during the twelve months that intervene between one meeting of the Assembly and another, to "a bench of Deacons commissioned only to disburse funds," which funds are to be raised only by Deacons within the bounds of each several congregation? I will venture to say there is not a man to be found who believes in the necessity and importance of the ends to be attained by these several Boards, and who is anxious for its accomplishment, that would adopt the system here proposed as in any measure adequate to such ends.

It is maintained by the objector, "that our Saviour constituted His Church with a special reference to missionary operations," and that therefore the Church is under obligation to carry on such operations by the best and most effective agency. But is this system such an agency? Are all the responsibilities which are inseparable from the conduct of these several departments of benevolent effort to be thrown upon a bench of Deacons who are by the very supposition limited to the single object of disbursing funds? Most plain it is that these operations cannot sustain themselves. Money, the funds requisite for their support,—these, however important, are not the moving principle, the life or soul of such enterprises. They require supervision, direction, and control. These moral influences are even more necessary than the physical resources. The latter may exist and yet may the enterprise fail, just as there may be machinery and water and yet no motion where there is no superintending mind to bring these elements into such a combination as to produce and preserve that motion. Let, then, our several operations be committed to such a bench of Deacons, restricted in their powers to the mere supply of funds, and they must run down in a single year. Confusion must ensue. They will be inevitably paralyzed.

There is to our minds no adaptation in the system here proposed of the means to the end. It is perfectly chimerical. It bases a system of practical operation upon a mere theoretical hypothesis. It assumes a self-controlling, self-perpetuating principle to exist somewhere or somehow within these operations. It attributes to our several judicatories a foresight and wisdom which can provide for the thousand contingencies which may arise during the course of every year, and that they could make all those provisional arrangements in the course of a brief session which now occupy busily during the entire year our several officers and Committees. It assumes that the funds will be voluntarily forthcoming from all our churches in every portion of the Church. It seems to imply that such benches of Deacons and such general

treasurers can be found to devote themselves to such agencies and duties, and to do so gratuitously. The whole scheme is built upon hypothesis and the most Utopian and gratuitous assumptions. It sets at defiance all consequences, all the calculations of prudence, and all the lessons of experience. It would pull down, subvert and destroy existing institutions before it has erected others to supply their place, and while there are no materials and no workmen by which such buildings can be possibly erected. The question, then, being whether our present system of Agencies shall be suspended or this scheme be adopted, the alternative most assuredly is the rejection of this hypothesis, or the suspension of all the benevolent operations of our Church.

As early as the year 1802 the General Assembly found it impossible during the term of its sessions to devote to these operations the time and attention demanded for their successful prosecution. The Assembly, therefore, appointed a standing Committee, to whom was entrusted the proper management of all their missionary affairs. For similar reasons, in the year 1816 this Committee was succeeded on their own recommendation by a Board, to whom this whole business was handed over. That Board has continued in succession until the present time, while the particular fields of education, of foreign missions, and of publication, have been respectively entrusted to the special oversight of special Boards. Against this whole system our objectors protest. They are, therefore, evidently bound to provide a substitute of more certain efficiency and power. And having, as we have just seen, utterly failed in this attempt, their objections fall to the ground, and our Church is under obligation to continue her present system for the accomplishment of her necessary work.

Such is our conclusion on the supposition that the system here proposed is scriptural and proper. We now proceed to show, however, that this is not the case, and that this scheme is not only a novelty, an innovation, inexpedient, and destructive of all our benevolent operations, but that it is also unscriptural and unconstitutional. It is unscriptural. It cannot be traced to the Scriptures directly. It cannot be deduced from them by necessary inference. It is, therefore, to be "denounced as a human invention." But still, if it could be made to appear the wisest means to secure an end which the Scriptures do make necessary, and for securing which no exact system of means is there provided in detail, it might be expedient and proper. But it is not only unsupported by positive Scripture enactment,—it is, we think, clearly contrary to Scripture. The Scripture teaches us that Deacons were instituted as officers of particular churches and for the single purpose of taking care of the poor, and of distributing among them the collections which were raised for their use. That Deacons are recog-

nized in Scripture only as the officers of a particular church, we never before heard questioned. Nor is it at all necessary to establish this fact until some plausible evidence can be produced against it. Our objector does, indeed, affirm that "those ordained at Jerusalem were not confined to a specific congregation, but acted for the whole college of the Apostles" (p. 155). We can hardly think this writer was serious when he made such a declaration. Does he mean to say that these Deacons were appointed as ministers to the Apostles, so as that when they left Jerusalem and were dispersed throughout the world, these Deacons acted for the whole college of Apostles? Did they accompany the Apostles in their missionary tours as their attendant Deacons? Manifestly not. They remained with the Church at Jerusalem, to whose interests they were devoted. And doubtless as the churches increased in that city, other Deacons were appointed to take charge of the poor connected with them. There is not a particle of evidence in the New Testament to support the idea that Deacons were officers in the Church catholic and not officers of some particular church. There is positive testimony to the contrary, since they are enumerated among the officers in particular churches (Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii.), and since the specific duty devolved upon them is only consistent with such a special charge.

To make Deacons, then, the officers of Presbyteries and Synods is to create new officers unknown to Scripture, and to constitute Benches of Deacons for the purpose of disbursing funds for missionary and other operations, however proper such employment may be in itself considered, is nevertheless to assign to them duties not given in the Word of God, and for which nothing like a precept can be anywhere discovered. The Bible knows nothing of Deacons but as officers appointed in each particular church, for the single purpose of taking care of the poor, and distributing among them the collections raised for their use. (Acts vi. 1, 2.) This scheme, therefore, is wholly unsupported by Scripture.

It is also unconstitutional. It contravenes the letter and the spirit of our Standards. It assigns to Deacons a character and duties which are unknown to those Standards. What are Deacons, according to our "Form of Government"? In chapter sixth it is taught: "The Scriptures clearly point out Deacons as distinct officers in the Church, whose business it is to take care of the poor, and to distribute among them the collections which may be raised for their use. To them, also, may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the Church."

In chapter thirteen it is said: "Every congregation shall elect persons . . . to the office of Deacon . . . in the mode most approved in that congregation. But in all cases the persons elected must be male

members in full communion in the Church in which they are to exercise their office." (Sect. ii.; see also sect. vi.)

Deacons are thus expressly and repeatedly denominated the officers of a particular congregation, and they are never recognized in any other character throughout our entire Standards. They are limited to a particular church, and they are not known beyond it. They are to act only under the direction and control of the Session. They are not even empowered to raise funds, certainly not by their own independent authority. They are to "distribute the collections which MAY BE RAISED FOR THEIR USE." Our Standards very judiciously add, as an inferential conclusion from the preceding, that "to them MAY be PROPERLY (though not as enjoined by any explicit Scripture or as in itself necessary[1]) committed the management of the temporal affairs of the Church." That Deacons are not empowered of themselves to raise collections is farther evinced by the declaration in chapter vii. (Form of Government), where "making collections for the poor and other pious purposes" is ranked among the ordinances of a particular church, and of course under the direction of the Session or the Ministers and Elders of that church.

To appoint Deacons, therefore, "as collecting agents of the Presbytery, in every congregation," is to interfere with the established authority and duties of church Sessions, through whom alone any such appointment can be constitutionally made. And to institute "a Committee of Deacons appointed by the Assembly" for "the transmission of funds to foreign parts," would be an interference with the provisions of the Constitution, as it regards the nature of the office thus assigned, the officers to whom it is given, and the body by which the appointment is made. No such duties can be constitutionally assigned to Deacons, as Deacons, nor by the Assembly as such, since it cannot remove from particular churches their particular officers with their full consent.

"If all our Boards," therefore, "were," as this writer desires, "converted into mere benches of Deacons, . . . there would be" the most "serious ground of objection to them" on the score of constitutional propriety. Such Boards or Benches would be as certainly an innovation, a new court or office in the Church, as they would be utterly insufficient, with the limited powers entrusted to them, for carrying on her operations. Our present Boards are objected to because unknown to Scripture and to our Standards, and therefore as implying a defective constitution. But in framing a substitutionary system of Agencies for the accomplishment of the necessary work, we have the creation of not less than three new officers unknown to

[1] Therefore does our Church allow each congregation to manage its temporal affairs according to its own wisdom.

Scripture and to our Standards. We have first in every Presbytery an order of permanent Agents for the purpose of collecting funds in every congregation. To call these *Deacons* is a perfect misnomer and founded on the most gratuitous assumptions. Secondly, we are to have several merchant officers in our large cities, "who for the usual percentage would attend to the whole matter" of transmitting funds, and with whose accounts, salary, expenditures, defaults, etc., etc., our ecclesiastical judicatories are to be regularly occupied. And, thirdly, we are to have Boards consisting of men here called *Deacons*, but who might be as well called *aldermen*, "commissioned only to disburse funds under the direction of the spiritual courts." As described on page 166, it does not appear to be even necessary that such a Board of finance should consist of ordained officers at all. "The funds thus raised could either be transmitted by mercantile agents of the Presbytery, or by a central Committee of the Assembly, consisting of *business men* charged only with executive duties, etc." Here, then, are three new officers alike unknown to Scripture and to our Standards. Here we have provision made for the monetary department of our benevolent operations, a department which requires indeed as much authority as any other while it communicates to its managers more influence; but for the superintendence and direction of the spiritual and moral interests involved we are to have no provision whatever. These are to take care of themselves. It is not possible for our judicatories to arrange the monetary concerns of their several operations for a year, without several new offices and officers, while it is possible for them to provide for every contingency affecting the moral bearings of their Missionaries, their missions, their young men and their publications.

I confess the whole scheme appears to my mind preposterous in the extreme. It is, as I view it, altogether visionary, and in no degree adapted to the necessities of the case. And since our objectors have been again and again required to produce some substituted agency more conformable to Scripture and more likely to secure the ends in view than those already established, and this is the only result of their long and frequent meditation, our conclusion is that no such system can be devised, and that while our existing system may be open to objection and may be susceptible of many improvements, it is notwithstanding necessary, proper, and to be faithfully preserved.

PART SECOND.

Ecclesiastical Boards accordant with the Standards of the Presbyterian Church, and therefore Constitutional.

SUFFICIENT has been said in order to expose the untenableness of the ground taken against our ecclesiastical organizations. Every reasonable mind will revolt against their destruction until some better system, free from the objections urged against the present, can be devised. Every such mind will conclude that since our benevolent operations must be sustained and carried forward, the existing agency must be maintained, unless it can be shown that those operations can be carried on by other means, and with increased energy and zeal. Our argument, therefore, might be here closed. But we are willing to meet the objections against our existing system, face to face, and sure we are they will be found invalid, or altogether inapplicable.

What, then, is the real object of attack on the one hand, and of defence on the other? Let our objector answer. "We do not," he says (p. 147), "object to this system" of ecclesiastical organizations, "on account of any slight or accidental evils which wisdom and experience may remove without affecting the essential elements of the system itself. Such evils or rather abuses exist. They are to be found in those regulations by which honorary membership is purchased for money, an enormity similar to the sin of Simon Magus, for which he met the rebuke of the Apostle; in their tendency to perpetuate themselves; and in the very partial amount of real investigation to which their proceedings are ever subjected. These are objections to the present plan on which our Boards are organized, but they lie not so much against the system itself as against partial and accidental abuses. The objections which have influenced our minds are radical and fundamental. We believe that the system in its essential principles is directly subversive of the Constitution of our Church, unknown to the Word of God, and unsupported by any arguments of expediency or necessity which can commend it to the understanding of a Christian man."

So, also, in his introduction, the writer speaks of "this system of measures which certainly has no surer foundations than that of prescription;" while in his conclusion he says, "We can have no reason to expect the assistance of the Lord, when we have trampled His institutions in the dust."

That, therefore, against which objections are now raised, and which we undertake to defend, is not our present ecclesiastical organizations in all their details, but only in their essential principles or elements. We do not, therefore, say that every part of our present system ought to be, or that it is necessary it should be, retained. The regulation by which honorary membership is purchased for money, may be safely

abolished. To this we should not object. The tendency of our Boards to perpetuate themselves, may be checked by any seasonable regulations. Their proceedings may be made the subject of a closer investigation until every one shall be abundantly satisfied. The Boards and their Committees may be merged into a single body, responsible directly to the Assembly, and in every respect subject to its control. And if there be any other evils or defects in the present system, we are abundantly willing that they should be rectified. None of these things constitute the subject of our present controversy. We demand for our ecclesiastical agency no powers inconsistent with the supremacy of the Assembly or the spirit of our Standards. The single question is whether for carrying on her missionary and other operations, the Assembly may scripturally and constitutionally appoint any body to whom shall be entrusted the management of these various operations during the intervals which elapse between the yearly sessions of that judicatory. This is the single question. That the Assembly has such power, is the only point for which we contend, and it is as plainly the principle against which the objector utters such a withering condemnation. That the Assembly has such authority he denies, and we affirm; "Whatever, therefore," he says, "is not done by Elders and Ministers, assembled in some one of the courts above mentioned, is not done by them as *Presbyterians*. It is only in these courts that we recognize the Church as an organized body. Here, and here alone, do we find Presbyterianism. Now we maintain that the system of Boards gives us a set of officers and a set of ecclesiastical courts entirely different from those of the Constitution." (See p. 149.)

The evils, abuses, or defects attributed to our existing Boards, but which are separable from them, are not therefore to be considered in the present argument. These are fair matters for a separate discussion. But the propriety and necessity of Boards or Committees of any kind for the management of the various benevolent operations in which the Church is engaged, with power to carry into execution any plans which it is competent for her to undertake,—this, we repeat, is the question before us. We are thus earnest in calling attention to this point, which is so clearly laid down by the objector himself, because in a subsequent part of his discussion he argues against our organization on the ground that the Boards as distinct from the Committees are unnecessary. This question is, however, very different from the general principle, and one which is to be decided on very different grounds.

Such an Agency, call it either a Board or a Committee, as he maintains, is "directly subversive of the Form of Government embodied in the Constitution of our own Church." "These courts (*i. e.*, Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and the General Assembly) are treated in our

Constitution as abundantly adequate to meet all the exigencies of the Church, and to do all that God requires her to do in her ecclesiastical capacity." It is, therefore, argued that since these Agencies or Boards are neither Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, nor General Assembly, the Assembly in appointing them transcends the powers given to it by the Constitution.

Now in contrariety to this we affirm that such Boards, Agencies, or Committees, with such powers, and for such ends, are necessary to carry out the purposes for which the Assembly itself was organized, and are therefore constitutional, and that some such Agency is contemplated by our Standards, and is, therefore, to be considered as in unquestionable accordance with them.

We lay it down as an universal principle that the imposition of any duty implies the correspondent right to use such means as are necessary to its discharge. Where any Constitution, civil or sacred, requires from its officers the discharge of any functions, or the attainment of certain ends, it at the same time gives the power necessary to carry such provisions into effect. This principle has been admitted in our political controversies by the strictest sect of our most rigid constructionists. Upon this principle our Church, also, acted in her late crisis, and with its certain propriety must all her famous acts and the present reformation of the Church stand or fall. Now our church courts, and especially the General Assembly, are, as is admitted, under certain obligation to secure those important ends which are contemplated by our several benevolent operations. They are most assuredly bound to the utmost of their ability and in the very best manner possible, to provide for the education of young men for the work of the ministry, for the instruction of the people generally, and for sending the Gospel where it is not enjoyed, as well in our country as in foreign lands. (See *Form of Government*, ch. xviii.) Such, then, being the duty imposed upon the General Assembly in particular, as the organ of the Church, that body is necessarily empowered to order all the details of her plan of operations guided and restrained by the general principles of the Constitution. But as the General Assembly remains in session but for a very short period, and the necessity for continuous direction, supervision and assistance continues during the whole year, it is most obvious that either these operations must be wholly abandoned, which would be on the supposition sinful, or else some Board, Committee or Agency must be entrusted with their management under a responsibility to that body. And as the supply of funds constitutes only one object for which such a body is necessary, and a general superintendence and control are still more necessary and important, this body must be entrusted not only with the power of disbursing funds, but also with the power to carry into execution all the plans of the Assem-

bly, and with the entire management of its various operations. Now whatever may be found in the constitution of our several Boards which can be shown to be unnecessary for these ends, for any such features in their organization we do not contend. They are fairly open to discussion, and may be retained or abandoned as shall be thought most conducive to the peace and prosperity of the Church. But to dissolve our several Boards, and to limit the power of direct control over the various benevolent operations of the Church, in all their details to the single periods of the sessions of any ecclesiastical judicatory, is at once and utterly to destroy them. It is to render their maintenance an impossibility. And since their vigorous prosecution is imperatively required, the argument which leads to such conclusions must be fallacious, and our Boards in their essential and radical principles must be constitutional.

This reasonable conclusion is forced upon us not only by the consideration of those necessary ends for whose attainment the Assembly and our other judicatories are held responsible, but also by certain provisions which are expressly contained in our written Standards. The power to organize such Boards for the better accomplishment of required duties, is implied in the very constitution of the General Assembly. The Assembly is to "constitute the bond of union, peace, correspondence, and mutual confidence among all our churches," and this it does by organizations for the wise conduct of those benevolent operations in which all the churches are equally interested. The Assembly is "to superintend the concerns of the whole Church" and "to promote CHARITY, truth, holiness, through all the churches under their care," and this it does by such plans of benevolence as will best cultivate these Christian graces, and open up to them the freest, the sweetest and the most economical channels for the communication of their gifts. The organization of such Boards or agencies is in so many words referred to the Assembly in our Form of Government, and in the chapter "Of Missions" (xviii.). In this chapter every needy congregation is taught that it is proper for it to look to the General Assembly, for such assistance as it can afford, to enable that congregation to enjoy the frequent administration of the Word and ordinances. But to meet all such claims, to examine into them, to provide the men and the means, and to do this effectually and throughout the year, the Assembly must devise some plan by which she can discharge these all-important duties. And thus will that body be necessarily required to organize some Board in all essential principles equivalent to the present Board of Domestic Missions, nor is it possible to meet the wants of the case without such a standing body.

Further. It is here taught that "the General Assembly may of their own knowledge send missionaries to ANY PART (or to any coun-

try) to plant churches or to supply vacancies, and for this purpose," etc. (See *Form of Government.*)

Now, in this provision of our book there is given to the Assembly, as will be at once apparent, all the powers requisite for the formation of a distinct agency for the management of its foreign missions. For the field being the world, and the obligation being limited only by the ability of the Church, there is evidently no assignable boundaries to the extent of our missionary operations. There may be under the care of the Assembly hundreds of churches and Ministers in various parts of the world. And how, in the name of common sense, is the Assembly, during one brief session, to provide for all the interests involved in such operations for a whole year? The very statement of the case makes palpably demonstrative the constitutional power here given to that body for the organization of a Board appointed by itself for the effectual oversight and management of such extensive operations.

This is made further evident by the concluding declaration of this chapter of our Constitution, which applies generally to Presbyteries, Synods, or the Assembly. It is competent to any of these bodies to send Missionaries, "provided always," etc. (See *Form of Government.*)

It is thus determined that our missionary operations shall be sustained by the body conducting them, which is here required to make every provision necessary not only for their support, but also for that more generous recompense which is implied in the word *reward.* The Assembly, therefore, is thus obligated to provide for all the wants of all her Missionaries and missions. But this it cannot do by its own direct agency, or during its own sessions. As, however, "*qui facit per alium facit per se,*" the Assembly can appoint a Board to whom it can entrust the supervision of this work, which is nothing more nor less than our Board of Foreign Missions in its essential principles. That Board, however, implies great labour and responsibility. It requires the continual and toilsome efforts of most trustworthy and pious men, and since the Church is equally bound to bear the expense necessary to secure the result as that which is involved in the result itself, so is it most just and reasonable that the Assembly should "provide for the support and reward" of its own agents (call them *Secretaries* or anything else) "in the performance of this service."

The same reasoning applies with equal force to the other branches of that benevolent enterprise which it is the sacred duty of the Church to carry on with ever increasing energy.

That it is competent for the Assembly to organize such an agency, may be further argued from the admissions made by our objectors themselves. "The temporary agency of a Pastor for a specific purpose,"

says the writer now under consideration, "we acknowledge to be scriptural." Now suppose the necessity involved in that specific purpose to continue and to press its claims with increasing weight upon that Minister, and upon the Church. Suppose those claims are entitled to be heard and attended to by the authority of Christ's commission given to the Church. What, we ask, is the Church to do? Is she not bound to continue such appointments so long as God in His providence presents to her the same wants to be supplied, and the same necessity to be met? If such an appointment for such benevolent ends, when the demand for it is temporary, is scriptural, then assuredly a similar appointment, when the demand for it is permanent, cannot be unscriptural. The Church has a certain duty to discharge, and she must therefore see that it is discharged. And if it is in any case scriptural and proper to appoint Pastors to certain fields of labour as most suitable for its successful cultivation, then it is as plainly scriptural to continue such appointments until the work is done. And as in the present state of our country and the world, the work to be done, is beyond the utmost capacity of our Church, and requires incessant labour, there must necessarily be those in office whose duty it is to labour continually in it.

Again, this writer tells us that the funds raised for these benevolent operations, "could either be transmitted by mercantile Agents of the Presbytery, or by a central Committee! of the Assembly, consisting of business men, charged only with executive duties and not entrusted with discretionary power." He has also given us a scheme of his own for the accomplishment of these ends which we have already examined. Now here the principle for which we contend is certainly admitted. It is granted that some agency is necessary. It is granted that that agency must be distinct from the Assembly—and it is granted that the Assembly may and of right ought to institute such an agency. But while he would confine it to the management of funds merely, we would extend it to the far more important and moral interests involved in these glorious enterprises of Christian charity. While he would make it a Committee of finance, we would clothe them with spiritual and moral responsibilities becoming the work for whose prosperity they are needed. While he would invent a new class of officers, called *Deacons of Presbyteries*, and *Deacons of Synods*, and *Deacons of the Assembly*, and combine these into new bodies and assign to them extra-constitutional duties, we would construct such important bodies out of constitutional materials, and select Ministers and Elders who are by Divine right spiritual governors and overseers of the interests of the Church, to whom the powers necessary for such a management of these operations are given by our Constitution, who are fit and proper members of our ecclesiastical courts,

and to whom, therefore, such weighty responsibilities may be fitly given.

I will now notice as briefly as possible the several objections urged by this writer against the Presbyterian character of our existing Boards.

And, first, it is said they "give us a set of officers and a set of ecclesiastical courts entirely different from those of our Constitution." Now to say nothing of the inappropriateness of such an allegation in the mouth of one whose proposed substitute implies the creation of "a new set of officers, and a new set of courts," we deny the truth of the representation. Our corresponding Secretaries, our general Agents, and the members of our several Boards are not new officers. They are not inducted into any new office. They are not clothed with any new character. They receive no new commission, nor any repeated ordination. They are the Ministers and Elders of our churches. They are chosen as such, and because they are such. Because they are officers of the Church, they are placed in responsible situations by the Church, and called upon to manage the most important operations which are conducted by the Church. Neither do they cease to be Elders or Ministers by becoming officially related to our Boards. On the contrary, while the Elders are still at their several posts, the Ministers are expected and required, in the furtherance of their duties, to preach with frequency. They are most properly called Ministers, since they serve the Church and the cause of Christ by furthering their highest interests. It is hazarding nothing to declare, that the Ministers who have occupied these responsible situations have fulfilled the work of the ministry in the proclamation of the ever-blessed Gospel and the edification of the churches, as effectually as they could have done in any particular charge, or as is done by our Ministers generally. Besides, the objection would apply equally to all Ministers who are professors in our colleges or theological seminaries. At any rate, since it proves too much, and is founded on the mistaken supposition that when removed from a ministerial charge such officers are removed from ministerial employment, or to some other work than the work and duties of the Church which she is under obligation to discharge, it proves nothing at all, and must be thrown aside.

But it is also objected that such Boards are new ecclesiastical courts which come "in direct and unavoidable collision with the authority of the courts acknowledged by our Standards." Now by an ecclesiastical court, I understand "an assembly of those who have the original and inherent power or authority of executing laws and distributing justice according to the Constitution, and in general, to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under their care."[1] But as thus defined, our several Boards are not ecclesiastical

[1] See an Ecclesiastical Catechism of the Presbyterian Church, chap. iv.

courts, but merely agencies for those courts already established. They neither claim nor possess original and inherent powers. They do not pretend by virtue of any such authority to execute laws and distribute justice. Nor do they assume any such prerogative as the ordering of whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches. These Boards have no such powers whatever. They have no original, inherent or independent existence at all. They are the offspring of our highest ecclesiastical court, created by it, responsible to it, existing only at its will, performing only its work, and restrained in everything by the code of by-laws sanctioned by that body. And as they have no original authority, so neither have they any final powers. Their business is unfinished until it receives the *imprimatur* of the Assembly, by which it *must* be reviewed, and by which it *may be* reversed or altered. They are merely the agents, the hands, the organs of the body, and by which it wields its own power. Such an agency our Standards recognize and our objector allows. In short, these Boards reviewed in their essential principle, are precisely what the writer defines to be Committees. They "are appointed for two purposes, to prepare and arrange business for the body which appoints them, and to execute specific trusts by the order and direction of that body to which they are responsible." They every year submit to the Assembly plans for future operation, and the record of their transactions according to the trust reposed in them during the year preceding. Our Boards, therefore, are just such Committees. They are and they ought to be no more, nor do we ask for them any greater power. That the Board and the Committee are now separate, is a feature in their organization which might be easily changed, and their identification with this definition of a Committee be made as perfect in form as it is in fact.

But, says our author, "the possession and exercise of power distinguish a court." But this clearly is not the case. This cannot be the definition of a court. These attributes may characterize a thousand things besides a court. They are descriptive of all Committees appointed either by our Presbyteries, Synods or Assembly, and of our Boards of Directors. A court must have original and inherent authority appertaining to the laws of the society, and which are administered by it. And, therefore, are we forced to the conclusion that our Boards are Committees of a peculiar organization, and for objects of permanent necessity, and that they are not ecclesiastical courts.

It is objected further, that "these institutions have the whole matter of preaching the Gospel to the destitute and ignorant at home and abroad entrusted to their charge;" in other words, "the power and jurisdiction granted by the Constitution to the Presbyteries are vested by the Assembly in its own creatures."

That our Boards may not possess some powers which ought not to

be committed to them, we do not affirm. If they do, let them be deprived of them, and at once reduced to constitutional limits. But that this representation is entirely visionary, we are perfectly assured. Our objector himself allows that our Boards do not lay any claim to many of the chiefest branches of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. He allows that they cannot ordain, and that they cannot institute actual process for crime or heresy. But they are authorized "to *appoint* all Missionaries and agents, and to designate their fields of labour." Most certainly this is the very work which they are designed to do, in trust for the Assembly, and responsible to it. But let it be observed, these Boards (we speak now of the Missionary Boards) have nothing whatever to do with such individuals until they are already tried, licensed or ordained by their respective Presbyteries. From the hands of these Presbyteries are they received by the Boards, and unless so commissioned and authenticated, neither of the Boards could receive them at all. Let it also be observed that when thus presented to them our Boards only *appoint*, they do not examine, license, or ordain as do our ecclesiastical courts. They *appoint* them as already Ministers, and not in order to their becoming Ministers. And this *appointment* of the Boards refers merely to their field of labour, and not at all to their qualifications for the work of the ministry. The Assembly contemplating these numerous missions, requires its Boards, in its name and by its authority, to act for it in this important matter. In this there is no infraction whatever of the rights of Presbyteries. Their authority remains undiminished. The Boards can receive no man until the Presbytery has sealed his fitness by the impress of its solemn consecration, and in designating individuals so commissioned to their fields of labour, these Boards only comply with the wishes of every Presbytery, through their common organ, the General Assembly. But should any Presbytery commence a mission of its own, it is at perfect liberty to select its field, and to appoint its men in entire independence upon either of these Boards. As to Domestic Missions, each Presbytery may superintend its own field, and while acting through the Board, have the most perfect control of its entire management. And as it regards the foreign field, it is to be remarked that this field, lying beyond the limits of any Presbytery, cannot, of course, be under their jurisdiction. It is hence incumbent upon the Board, on behalf of the Church, to take the oversight thereof, until a sufficient number of Missionaries have been sent out to constitute a Presbytery. In this event, that distant territory is assigned to the newly-erected Presbytery, and comes under its ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

Equally inapplicable is the objection that our Boards interfere with the parity of the clergy, and invest their officers with a control over their brethren, and a power in the Church just as real and just as dan-

gerous as that of a Prelate!! That undue influence may be exerted by the officers of our Boards, we grant—that is, their trust may be abused for their own personal aggrandizement. But would this influence be lessened by the appointment of Benches or Boards of Deacons, and financial dictators under the style of *Treasurers*, with unlimited control of the funds? Or would it be in any great measure removed, were this work to be conducted through the year, as it must be by some body or other, by a Commission of the Assembly, instead of a Board of the Assembly? Let, then, this power be guarded and restrained in every possible and proper manner, but let not an evil which is incidental, be made a sufficient ground for the abandonment of a most necessary office. It is perfectly idle to frighten us with the imaginary picture of new orders in these ecclesiastical functionaries. They are and can be no other than simple Ministers or Elders, nor is any individual subjected to their personal authority, or excluded from the privilege of presenting any symptoms of arbitrary conduct for the reprobation of the General Assembly.

It is further objected that by the organization of these Boards for the management of these benevolent operations, the Church ceases to conduct them in her appropriate character as required by her Divine Head.. But is not our Church represented in her General Assembly? Does she not empower this body to conduct these operations? Does she not now, in fact, leave their entire management and supervision to its legislative wisdom, in dependence upon the separate co-operation of all the churches, Presbyteries and Synods within her bounds? And is it not plainly impossible for the Assembly, or for all our courts together, to enter into all the details involved in the management of these operations, during their annual and brief sessions? But still they must be attended to, and by the Assembly in its appropriate character. The Assembly, therefore, appoints an agency to attend to these matters during its adjournment, and to report in full at its next sessions. This appointment is annually renewed, the reports heard, and all needful directions given. These Agencies or Boards acting for the Assembly, and under its authority, and for the accomplishment of its work, which could not otherwise possibly be done, are properly in the eyes of the Constitution and of reason the Church by her Assembly fulfilling the trust committed to her by her glorious Head.

Our ecclesiastical Boards are, therefore, necessary to carry out the provisions of the Constitution; they contravene no principle or law of our Standards. Being the creatures of the Assembly, and dependent upon its yearly appointments, and subject to its entire control, they may be in everything conformed to the wishes of the Church, and are, therefore, to be regarded as eminently Presbyterian in their character, and worthy of the most entire confidence, and the most zeal-

ous support of every one who loves the Church of his fathers, the true model of primitive and apostolic Christianity.

PART THIRD.

Ecclesiastical Boards are not contrary to, but in full accordance with, the principles laid down in the Word of God.

If the ends contemplated by our ecclesiastical organizations are necessary and all important, if to secure these ends some agency besides the authoritative legislation of our ecclesiastical courts is also essential, if the system of means proposed by the objectors to our present Boards is wholly insufficient to meet the difficulties of the case, and in itself seriously objectionable, then are our present Boards, in their essential principles, to be retained, however they may be modified. That our Standards empower the General Assembly to engage in those benevolent operations whose management is entrusted to our Boards, has been made apparent. That some such agency as our Boards is absolutely required by the Assembly, for their oversight and direction, has been also proved, while the futility of all objections against their constitutionality has been briefly exposed.

These Boards are, however, objected to on the very serious ground of their unscripturalness. "Now the total silence of the Word of God in regard to such contrivances seals their condemnation. Nay, they are virtually prohibited by those plain directions of the Scriptures in regard to church-government, which lead directly to a different system." "The Church is to add nothing of her own, and to subtract nothing from what her Lord has established. Discretionary power she does not possess."

It is necessary, therefore, to show that such ecclesiastical Boards are in accordance with Scripture, and that, in urging this objection, its authors proceed upon an entirely mistaken view of the real question in debate. In making this position clear, we might take two different methods. As we argue with those who acknowledge the perfect scripturality of our Standards, we might at once shut up the question. For as we have established the accordance of these Boards with our Constitution, they must necessarily be conformable to the Word of God. This reasoning the objector himself admits. Or we may at once appeal to the Word of God, and by exhibiting the conformity of these Boards with that Word, thence conclude that they are certainly right, and must be supposed accordant with our ecclesiastical institutes.

Now that the Scriptures explicitly lay it down as the imperative duty of the Church to secure those ends which are contemplated by

our several benevolent operations, we may assume as fully admitted. Indeed the furtherance of these objects, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, is the one great design of the Church as a visible and organized body. We may also assume that this commanded duty, for which our Church (that we may bring home our illustration) is responsible, can best be performed through that General Assembly which is her highest ecclesiastical court, in which all her churches and Presbyteries are represented, with which all can most conveniently co-operate, and to which the powers necessary for this purpose are explicitly given in her Constitution. Our General Assembly, then, being, as the objector will admit, scripturally authorized and required, as the organ of the Church, to prosecute, to the utmost of its ability, these several branches of Christian benevolence, the only question is whether this work can be done at all, or at least done to any advantage, by the Assembly in its own person; or, whether it is necessary to be done by the Assembly, as a supreme director, guide and legislator, and several Boards or Agencies, which may outlive the sessions of that body and continue in vigorous operation when that body is defunct and incapable of action.

Now, we unhesitatingly affirm that our general principle is as applicable here as it is to any human constitution. God having imposed upon our General Assembly, as the organ of the Church, and by the desire of the Church, these necessary duties which it may not neglect, but must see performed, and not having prescribed in detail the plan and measures by which these duties are to be discharged, has most certainly empowered that body, under the guidance and control of the general rules laid down in Scripture, to make use of every proper means for the successful prosecution of these Christian enterprises. This principle we must affirm to be undeniably certain. Its rejection would lay the axe to many a fair branch of our ecclesiastical polity, and leave a bare and barren trunk behind it. It would tie up the hands and feet of our sacred polity and deprive it of all power of motion. It would emasculate it of all its strength and vigour and reduce it to a helpless and exanimate system. That which the Church is required to do she is empowered to do by all means not expressly forbidden, or implicitly countermanded, and it will not surely be pretended that the Assembly being scripturally ordained, an agency for the certain and efficient prosecution of its necessary duties is anywhere so forbidden. The Church is the converter of the heathen, the regenerator of our waste and ruined world. But as represented in her General Assembly, she can act in this matter only for a few days, and therefore most imperfectly. She must, therefore, employ in subserviency to this court subordinate Agencies or Boards, which are, therefore, as plainly sanctioned by the Divine Word.

That "the total silence of the Word of God in regard to such contrivances seals their condemnation," or that "whatever could not be traced to them either directly or by necessary inference is to be denounced . . . as mere will-worship, which God abhors;" this principle, we say, taken in its unrestricted and absolute nakedness, would subvert the foundations of every Church on earth, and leave not a wreck behind of church polity, order or arrangements. It would wipe out, as with a sponge, nine-tenths of all that is laid down in our Form of Government and Discipline. These Standards declare that this Form of Government, as there delineated and drawn out into all the details of management and business, rests on the adoption of it by the Church, as amended and ratified by the General Assembly in May, 1821. (See *Form of Government*, b. i., c. i.) This whole Form our Church only claims "to be expedient and agreeable to Scripture," but not so as to be exclusive of those which differ from it. (*Form of Government*, c. viii., § 1.) For many of its specific regulations, our Book claims no express testimony from the Word of God; it bases them upon the fact that they are accordant with its general principles. This we might illustrate at any length, from a consideration of the provisions respecting church Sessions (see *Form of Government*, c. ix.), Presbyteries (c. x.), Synods (c. xi.), the General Assembly (c. xii.), Ruling Elders (c. xiii.), the Forms of Licensure, Ordination Installation, and numberless other points. To every one of these the "total silence of the Word of God" might be objected, and their condemnation sealed. The objection is evidently untenable, unsound, and utterly subversive of all liberty of action beyond the mere letter of the law. It is Judaical. It would overturn the glorious liberty of the Gospel dispensation. It would again subject us to the bondage of the law, whereas the objector states, "nothing connected with the worship or discipline of the Church of God was left to the wisdom or discretion of man, but everything was accurately prescribed by the authority of God." But from this yoke of rules and ceremonies the Son of God has emancipated His Church. She is now under a dispensation of principles and not of rules. The Church has passed from a state of pupilage to the age of maturity. God now speaks to her as to a full-grown, reasonable person. He has given to her general laws and great fundamental principles. He has enjoined upon her certain great and glorious duties. By those laws she is to be restrained and guided in the exercise of her own wisdom, in devising the ways and means for the accomplishment of the greatest good in the best possible manner. This is most assuredly the doctrine of our Standards, as has been already practically demonstrated, and as may be preceptively declared. In the opening chapter of our Confession of Faith, and while treating on one of the most essential points in the

whole Book, the following principle is maintained: "There are some circumstances concerning the worship of God and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies," as, for instance, the detailed plan by which any prescribed duty shall be best accomplished, "which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word which are always to be observed." (Ch. i., § vi.) So, also, in treating of Synods, which include our General Assembly, our Confession teaches us that "it belongeth to Synods . . . to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and the government of the Church." (Ch. xxxi., § 2.)

Such, also, was the view taken of this matter by all the Reformers, and by the Non-conformists even, the most strict constructionists among them. Our objector is here certainly mistaken. He confounds things which differ. He confounds that which is necessary as an article of faith, or as a means of grace, or as an important and enjoined part of the worship of God, with that which is necessary as a means for the accomplishment of a duty which is confessedly required in God's Word or included under the general provisions of the Church. The imposition of the former, the Reformers, the Puritans, the Non-conformists, and our Presbyterian fathers, steadfastly resisted as a treasonable usurpation of the kingly prerogatives of the Head of the Church. They contended against the assumed power authoritatively to interpret the Bible, and declare what is truth, and to decree rites and ceremonies as a necessary part of the worship of God, and to make forms and orders essential to the being of the Church in opposition to both Romanists and Prelatists, when needs were, even unto blood. And right sure we are, that their spirit has not died with them, but is even now burning in the hearts of their honoured successors, who would exultingly bear testimony for this liberty of God's ransomed Church, even on the scaffold or at the stake. But the framing of articles of faith, and the imposition of means of grace, with rites, orders and ceremonies, as parts of God's holy worship, is one thing, and the power to carry out the acknowledged provisions of the Gospel and the commanded duties which are imposed by Divine authority on the Church, by the wisest and best means, is another and a very different matter. Did our Church undertake to declare that her ecclesiastical organizations were of Divine right, were in all their detail instituted by Christ, were to be received as His, and to be implicitly obeyed, and that they were a necessary part of her Divine polity, and thus binding on the conscience of her members, not as a good means toward a necessary end, but as in themselves necessary, then, indeed, would she jeopard her authority and prelatize the Church, and call forth from every true-hearted Presbyterian the strong language of

indignant rebuke, and stout and unyielding resistance. But when our Assembly for the certain and successful accomplishment of duties devolved upon her by the Head of the Church, and by us its members, appoints these bodies, as in her wisdom, the best instrumentality through which she can achieve these purposes, then indeed we are at liberty to point out deficiencies, and to correct mistaken policy, and to adjust the system to a perfect accordance with the general rules of Scripture and of our Standards, but to say that the appointment itself is unscriptural and un-Presbyterian is preposterous in the extreme.

Power may be attributed to the Church in several aspects. Without going into particulars, we may observe that an original, inherent, or legislative power over the house of God we, as consistent Protestants utterly deny to the Church. But a power ministerially to declare the will of God, and to carry out the requirements of heaven, in accordance with the general rules of God's holy Word, this the whole Church in every age warrants, this reason itself demands, this the Scriptures certainly allow.

Such were the views of the immortal Calvin, as expounded with consummate skill, in his inimitable Institutes. Turn to his lengthened chapter on "the Power of Legislation" (b. iv., ch. x.), and these principles will be found fully developed. "This power," says he, "is now to be examined, whether the Church has authority to make laws which shall bind the consciences of men." "Against such laws we contend, and not against the holy and useful constitutions of the Church which contribute to the preservation of discipline, or integrity, or peace." "I only contend for this one point, that no necessity ought to be imposed upon our consciences in things on which they have been set at liberty by Christ." "If human laws tend to introduce any scruple into our minds, as though the observance of them were essentially necessary, we assert that they are unreasonable impositions on the conscience. For our consciences have to do not with men, but with God alone." "A second consideration . . . is, that human laws, I mean such as are good and just, whether enacted by magistrates OR THE CHURCH, THOUGH THEY ARE NECESSARY TO BE OBSERVED, are not on this account, binding on the conscience, because all the necessity of observing them has reference to the general object of laws," as in the case before us, the accomplishment of the work of Missions, "but does not consist in the particular things which are commanded. There is AN IMMENSE DISTANCE between laws of this description and those which prescribe any new form for the worship of God, and impose a necessity in things that were left free and indifferent." Again, in section xvi., he says, "if any one wish to have a simple statement of what are the human traditions of all ages

which ought to be rejected and reprobated by the Church and all pious persons, the direction we have already given is clear and certain, that they are all laws made by men without the Word of God, for the purpose either of prescribing any method for the worship of God, or of laying the conscience under a religious obligation, as if they enjoined things necessary to salvation." And now hear him speak in section xxvii., "But, as many ignorant persons, when they hear that the consciences of men ought not to be bound by human traditions, and that it is vain to worship God by such services, immediately conclude the same rule to be applicable to all the laws which regulate the order of the Church, WE MUST ALSO REFUTE THEIR ERROR." Under this head, which is all in point, he remarks: "The laws, therefore, which promote this end (order), we are so far from condemning, that we contend their abolition would be followed by a disruption of the bands of union, and the total disorganization and dispersion of the churches. For it is impossible to attain what Paul requires, that all things be done decently and in order, unless order and decorum be supported BY ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS," etc. Thus clear and evident was this distinction to the mind of this illustrious Reformer. We are the more full and particular in the exhibition of his opinions, because we have reason to know, that the force of the objections urged against our Boards is based upon the principles developed in this very Book of the Institutes of Calvin. Here, however, it is expressly taught, that while the Church has no authority to impose new articles of faith, or new laws, binding on the conscience, she has power for the attainment of prescribed ends, to devise such laws and regulations as shall best secure them, restrained only by the general rules of God's Word.

This distinction, and this power and liberty of the Church we might, if necessary, further illustrate.[1] But enough has been said to detect the fallacy of the objection, to clear this obscure subject from

[1] This principle of Protestantism is thus laid down by Dr. Owen, in his Answer to Stillingfleet (Works, vol. xx., p. 282), and he might be supposed to present it in its strictest form: "The first general principle the Protestants pleaded, was that the Scripture, the Word of God, is a perfect rule of faith and religious worship, so as that nothing ought to be admitted which is repugnant unto it in its general rule or especial prohibitions, nothing IMPOSED that is not prescribed therein, but that every one is at liberty to refuse and reject everything of that kind." And in illustrating the evils which arose from the neglect of this principle, he says, "this persuasion in some places made further progress, namely, that it was lawful to impose on the consciences and practices of men such things in religious worship, provided that they concerned outward order, rites, rule and ceremonies, as are nowhere prescribed in Scripture, and that on severe penalties, ecclesiastical and civil. This almost utterly

that cloudy mist in which it is involved, and to present the conformity of our ecclesiastical Boards, in their essential principles, with the Word of God, in a light so clear as not to be resisted.

Where Scripture requires anything to be done, without specifying the manner in which it is to be done, we are of necessity left to the guidance of its general rules and right reason. So where our Standards enjoin, or imply any duty, but do not specifically declare the way in which it is to be discharged, here also are we left to select such means as are best adapted to compass the end in accordance with its general rules.

Thus far are we, as Christians and as Presbyterians, at liberty to consult expediency, in carrying out any measures of Christian duty. Only it is to be carefully observed that just where expediency begins, there does the power of binding the conscience cease. So that it were spiritual despotism to enforce as necessary that which is enjoined only upon the ground of expediency.

We will only further notice the allegation, that, under the existing system, there is no security whatever for the dissemination of the truth. This is a most grave and serious allegation, involving the deepest interests, and demanding for its substantiation the most satisfactory evidence. "Those who contribute to our Boards do not," it is said, "know, and cannot know, whether they are sustaining Arminians, Semi-Pelagians, or Presbyterians. They do not know, in other words, whether they are building up or pulling down the kingdom of the Redeemer." Now when the magnitude of our missionary enterprises is considered, when the responsibilities under which our Boards, and through them our General Assembly and the whole Church, are already laid are realized, and the pressing necessities of the future are taken into account; when it is remembered how intimately associated are all the hopes of all our missionary stations and of an unregenerated world, so far as the agency of our Church is concerned, with our missionary Boards; when these things are seriously contemplated, we cannot but deplore the utterance of such sentiments as these. Is it in truth so? Are these criminations borne out by the facts of the case? Then is it high time to abandon operations which, instead of conveying the glad tidings of salvation to men perishing for lack of knowledge, are only channels through which the bitter waters of pestiferous and soul-destroying error diffuse their baneful influences. We cannot but say, that there is a most heavy responsibility involved in the publication of such bold and confident denunciations. Charity, at best, is a feeble and sickly grace. It is so rooted in the soil of selfishness, and so surrounded by all the blighting influences of earthly pas-

destroyed the great fundamental principle of the Reformation whereon the Reformers justified their separation from the Church of Rome."

sions, as to attain, in the large majority even of Christians, but a stinted growth. It requires little to repress its budding desires, or to wither its opening blossoms, or to dry up its ripening fruit. And when any argument is offered which wears any semblance of holy zeal, by the admission of which some excuse may be given for the withholdment of liberality, it is, alas, too easy for the very best of us to yield to its influence. Now to hold up to the view of our church that system of benevolent operation through which its bounty is conveyed to the objects of its sympathy, as "fraught with nothing but mischief and disorder," as what is to be "denounced as a human invention, as mere will-worship which God abhors so deeply that an inspired Apostle has connected it with idolatry or the worshipping of angels," as affording no security to their supporters, "whether they are sustaining Arminians, Semi-Pelagians, or Presbyterians, or "whether they are building up or pulling down the kingdom of the Redeemer," what is this but at once to make it the duty of every truth-loving man to withdraw his charity, and to shut up his bowels of compassion? Is there, then, that sufficient ground of terror and alarm for the truth as it is in Jesus, which could alone excuse denunciations so unqualified, and consequences so disastrous as these? We boldly say, that no such ground for any reasonable fears, on this account, can be pointed out. We confidently affirm that our Boards increase, and may be made still further to increase, and that they cannot possibly decrease, that security which would be afforded to the Church for the orthodoxy of her Missionaries sent out by their respective Presbyteries. Respecting, as we do so highly, the eminent talents of our objector, we wonder with an increasing amazement, at the strange and paradoxical conclusions to which he has been led. When Missionaries are sent out by our Boards of Missions, we have no means, it is said, of knowing whether they are Pelagians, or Arminians, or Presbyterians, but when sent out by a Presbytery, or even by a neighbouring Presbytery, then we "have full security for the soundness of the man whom (such Presbytery was) called on to assist"!!

What, then, is this infallible security? What can it be, in the first case, but the examination of the party by such members of his Presbytery as happened to be present, and, in the second case, the report of such an examination, as made by one Presbytery to another? But our objector has himself told us, *that Presbyteries are sometimes as mischievous as any other bodies.*" What if the majority of such a Presbytery are disposed to countenance error, or are incapable of discovering its latent springs? Or what if any individual is inclined to disguise his sentiments, and to assume a character of temporary orthodoxy? Absolute security we never can have, by any conceivable process, for the perfect correctness in every necessary doctrine of our

Licentiates or ordained Ministers. And even if such certainty could be attained to-day, by what means is such a condition of perfect orthodoxy to be perpetuated in every such individual? It is perfectly idle, as our objector would say, to tell me that as a member of a Presbytery, I would have perfect security for the soundness, and for the continued soundness in the faith, of every Missionary sent out to foreign lands by that or by any neighbouring Presbytery. I would have no such thing. Probable and sufficient grounds of confidence I would have, but full and perfect security I would not possess, since even our objector teaches that "*we must have no confidence in the flesh, and that Presbyteries are sometimes as mischievous as any other bodies.*"

But as the matter now stands, there is, I contend, every security given, for the character and views of our various missionaries, that could be obtained by the limitation of their appointment to a single Presbytery; and an additional security, which on the plan proposed, never could be given. That the former proposition is correct, is evident from a moment's consideration of the facts of the case. Every missionary, employed either by the Board of Domestic or Foreign Missions, before he can come before them as a suitable candidate for any appointment whatever, must give evidence that he has been received and licensed or ordained by some Presbytery in good standing in our Church. This is the first principle in the organization of the Boards. They know nothing, as such, of the trials or licensure of candidates for the ministry. This whole business remains in all its entireness with each several Presbytery. Every Presbytery, therefore, and every neighbouring Presbytery has, as it regards every employed missionary connected with either of our Boards, precisely that "full security from their position for the soundness of the man whom they are called on to assist," which the objector demands. This is, and must be the fact, in every single instance. And if our objector cannot extend the limits of this security beyond a single Presbytery, and its neighbouring associate, then our Boards render it perfectly open for any one or any two Presbyteries to unite in the particular support of any one, or of any number of men, in whose soundness they have this full and sufficient confidence. Thus to illustrate: the Presbytery of Charleston sent forward to our Board of Foreign Missions, a year ago, a very worthy and esteemed young brother, who received an appointment as missionary to China. Now I ask the objector whether during all the stages of his progress toward the ministry, or in his final examinations, trials and licensure, any member of that Presbytery was in any measure hindered from attaining that "full security, which from his position he might easily possess, of the soundness of the man whom he should afterward be called on to assist?" Most assuredly

not. Of his soundness and qualifications, therefore, every member of the Presbytery of Charleston, and so also, of the Presbytery of Harmony, on the one hand, and of the Presbytery of Georgia on the other, had the "full security from their position." Such, also, as our objector teaches, is the case in reference to other missionaries belonging to that same honoured Presbytery, which has representatives in China, and in Asia, and in Palestine, and in Persia. What, then, is to hinder these Presbyteries from contributing their funds through the Board, supposing these missionaries all to be connected with it, and for the special support of such beloved brethren? Nothing whatever. Our objector, then, is evidently mistaken in his apprehensions of the real state of the case. Whatever the Boards have to do in the matter, they can, in no way, interfere with that full security which our objector requires, and which certainly should be possessed.

But there is, we contend, in the organizations of our Boards, a security for the perfect propriety and soundness of our several missionaries additional to that which is enjoyed, in undiminished fulness, by every separate Presbytery. It is a very possible and supposable thing, that any single Presbytery might be itself lax in its doctrinal views, or that it might be mistaken in its estimate of any given man. Now, in this case, the Board may have come to the knowledge of the facts in the case, and while it cannot institute any process against the party, it may dissuade him from the work—it may impede his immediate entrance upon it until the Assembly shall have been consulted—and the Church shall have an opportunity of preventing the commissioning of such an unworthy herald of the cross. The Boards, as far as their authority extends, act not for any particular Presbytery, but for the entire Church, as the organ of the Assembly. They leave, therefore, to each Presbytery, and to the Church, the full security given by our constitutional provisions, and they superadd to this a further measure of security in that vigilant circumspection they are required to exercise for preventing the introduction into any field under their care of any unworthy candidate. These Boards, being representatives of the General Assembly—which is itself the annually delegated representation of every portion of the Church—and being annually elected by, and subject to, the entire control of that body—cannot be supposed so likely to be generally corrupt as any single, isolated, independent and permanent Presbytery. And while it is very possible that in any given case, these Boards may err, and may transcend the bounds within which they should be certainly confined, their mismanagement can, at most, extend only to the period of a single year. For whatever may be the present arrangement as to the term of office of each member, the whole matter in all its bearings is in

the hands of every single Assembly, and subject to its unlimited control.

Our objector, then, has allowed himself to be deluded by an *ignis fatuus* in his just zeal for the purity of the Gospel; and, while seeking for the Church greater security, would actually deprive her of that which she now enjoys. Most certain it is, that no warrantable pretext has been afforded him for publishing such a sweeping condemnation, on such serious grounds, of these appointed agencies of the Church. He has inflicted a wound it may be very difficult to heal, and whose festering sore may long continue to give uneasiness and pain to the body spiritual. The objector and his colleagues in this work of opposition have talents, influence and power. They may carry their views with irresistible force to many minds. They may thus alienate the resources of the Church, while she is but commencing her glorious course of heavenly charity. We would beseech and entreat them as brethren to pause, before they advance further in this career, and not to hazard the peace, union, and prosperity of the Church, and the successful prosecution of our benevolent operations.

That the ends contemplated by these brethren are holy, we believe. That their aims are high and Christian, we also rejoice in admitting. With these aims we desire to sympathize, and for these ends we would also strive. The glory of God in the salvation of men, through sanctification of the truth—let this be our only object. If in our present instrumentality for the accomplishment of this purpose there be aught superfluous or wanting, let it be retrenched or added. We advocate no abuses. We patronize no existing evils. We may be found uniting with these very brethren in many of their proposed amendments. But in their responsibilities, in thus publicly holding up to reprobation the whole machinery by which every benevolent operation of the Church is conducted, we would not partake. And in the spirit of the most affectionate kindness (and toward one, of the most respectful deference and regard), we would entreat them to remember that while it is easy to destroy, it is most difficult to restore, and that over the ruins of our present noble charities we may all have cause to weep in bitter lamentation.

The lawfulness and scripturalness of ecclesiastical Boards have, we trust, been now demonstrated; and the untenableness of all objections urged against them exposed. There are many things in this Argument against Boards to which we might advert, but as we have no wish to cavil or oppose we pass them by. Neither is it necessary for us at any length distinctly to consider the objection against the expediency of such organizations. This subject has been already necessarily considered in its principle, and the true source of the objector's difficul-

ties pointed out. Expediency is unquestionably a necessary and lawful guide—not to the discovery or the determination of duty—but to its accomplishment, in every case where a detailed plan has not been prescribed. The duty of the Church is, in the case under discussion, imperative. The specific mode in which that duty is to be carried into full effect, is not laid down—and therefore, while any wise plan which is accordant to the general rules of Scripture is lawful, experience and prudence must determine which is most expedient.

Were anything wanting to confirm the truth of these conclusions, it might be found in the fact, that while the Presbyterian Church has ever been accustomed, both in this country and in Scotland, to the appointments of commissions, of more or less extent, with the full powers of the body constituting them, and for the execution of given trusts, so have the Presbyterian Churches in Ireland and in Scotland been led to the organization of similar Boards or Committees for the very same purposes as our own, and with substantially the same powers. The Church of Scotland has now her several committees (who are not benches of deacons), for the entire management of each of those five great schemes of benevolence in whose prosecution she is embarking with such commendable zeal and liberality. So also has the Presbyterian Church of Ireland her Educational and Missionary Committees or Boards for the management of all the business connected with these several objects of Christian philanthropy. And while it is true of our own branch of the Church, that her zeal and activity in all the departments of benevolent enterprise have been increased a thousand fold, by means of her various Boards, it is not less certain that with the stirring impulse of enlarged charity, our sister, or rather mother, churches in Ireland and Scotland, have been at once, and without hesitation, led to the organization of substantially similar agencies. And what, I ask, has been the teaching of experience as delivered to our own churches? I will refer to the case of the Southern Board of Foreign Missions, with whose operations I am most familiar, and which may be taken as a fair criterion in drawing our conclusions. During the past two years, no general agency has been in this field. The churches were fully apprised that no agency might be expected, and that they must voluntarily put forth their strength. Our Synod passed resolutions encouraging such liberality, and our ministers made willing promises of co-operation. And yet during the last year, out of some one hundred and seventy churches, within the bounds of that Board and the Synod of S. C. and Geo., not more than twenty did anything at all for foreign missions, and a still fewer number observed the monthly concert for prayer, at all. Strange, too, as it may appear, yet it is a fact, that the amounts raised in even these few churches were, in more than

half the number, collected through the assistance of some extraneous agency.

The perfect consistency of such ecclesiastical Boards or Agencies, therefore, with Scripture, and with our Standards, and their absolute necessity to the conduct of such extensive schemes of Christian charity, are thus made to rest upon the certain ground of universal experience —as well as upon the most clear, evident, and irrefragable arguments. Such Boards and Agencies are absolutely required for the furtherance of such benevolent operations. The one cannot exist and thrive where the others are wanting. They are, in the present state of the Church, correlative the one to the other; so that where the one is necessary, the other must be introduced, and where the means are wanting, the end will never be secured.

APPENDIX B.

PRESBYTERIANISM:

BY THE REV. CHARLES HODGE, D.D.

Much time was devoted, at the late meeting of the General Assembly at Rochester, to the discussion of the question, What is Presbyterianism? That question, indeed, had only a remote connection with the subject before the house. That subject was the Boards of the church. These, on the one side, were pronounced to be not only inexpedient, but unscriptural and unlawful; not only useless excrescences, but contrary to the divine rule prescribed in the word of God, and a reproach to our blessed Saviour. We were called upon to reject them as a matter of duty, or forfeit our allegiance to Christ. On the other side, it was contended that the Boards were not only highly useful, as experience had proved, but that they were entirely within the discretion which Christ had granted to his church, and therefore compatible with obedience to his will, and with our allegiance to his authority.

To make out any plausible argument in support of the doctrine that the Boards are anti-scriptural, required, of course, a peculiar theory of Presbyterianism; a theory which should exclude all discretionary power in the church, and tie her down to modes of action prescribed as of divine authority in the word of God. That theory, as propounded by Dr. Thornwell in his first speech on the subject, was understood to embrace the following principles: 1. That the form of government for the church, and its modes of action, are prescribed in the word of God, not merely as to its general principles, but in all its details, as completely as the system of faith or the moral law; and therefore everything for which we cannot produce a "Thus saith the Lord," is unscriptural and unlawful.

2. Consequently, the church has no more right to create a new office, organ, or organization, for the exercise of her prerogatives or the execution of her prescribed work, than she has to create a new article of faith, or to add a new command to the Decalogue.

3. That the church cannot delegate her powers. She must exercise them herself, and through officers and organs prescribed in the Scriptures. She has no more right to act by a vicar, than Congress has to delegate its legislative power, or a Christian to pray by proxy.

4. That all executive, legislative, and judicial power in the church is in the hands of the clergy, that is, of presbyters, who have the same ordination and office, although differing in functions.

5. That all power in the church is joint, and not several. That is, it can be exercised only by church courts, and not in any case by individual officers.

In opposition to this general scheme, "the brother from Princeton" propounded the following general principles:

1st. That all the attributes and prerogatives of the church arise from the indwelling of the Spirit, and consequently, where he dwells, there are those attributes and prerogatives.

2d. That as the Spirit dwells not in the clergy only, but in the people of God, all power is, *in sensu primo*, in the people.

3d. That in the exercise of these prerogatives, the church is to be governed by principles laid down in the word of God, which determine, within certain limits, her officers and modes of organization; but that beyond those prescribed principles and in fidelity to them, the church has a wide discretion in the choice of methods, organs and agencies.

4th. That the fundamental principles of our Presbyterian system are first, the parity of the clergy; second, the right of the people to a substantive part in the government of the church; and third, the unity of the church, in such sense, that a small part is subject to a larger, and a larger to the whole.

Without attempting any development of these principles, the remarks of the speaker in reply to Dr. Thornwell's first speech, were directed to the single point on which the whole question in debate turned. That was, Is the church tied down in the exercise of her prerogatives, and in the performance of her work, to the organizations or organs prescribed in the New Testament? In other words, is everything relating to the government and action of the church laid down in detail in the word of God, so that it is unlawful to employ any organs or agencies not therein enjoined? If this is so, then the Boards are clearly unlawful; if it is not so, the having them or not having them is a matter of expediency. Dr. Thornwell, in his reply, instead of answering the arguments on that point, which was really the only point properly at issue, confined himself almost exclusively to attempting to prove that his brother from Princeton "was no Presbyterian." In doing this he first assailed the position that where the Spirit is, there the church is; or, as it was really stated on the floor of the As-

sembly, that the attributes and prerogatives of the church arise from the indwelling of the Spirit; and, therefore, where the Spirit is, there are those attributes and prerogatives; and secondly, he attempted to show that the parity of the clergy, the right of the people to take part in the government of the church, and the unity of the church are not the fundamental principles of Presbyterianism. As this question has a general interest, it may be proper to consider it more fully than respect for the time of the Assembly permitted in the presence of that body. A single statement of principles was all that was then deemed allowable.

As to the first of the above-mentioned principles, it was not presented as anything peculiar to Presbyterianism. It is simply an axiom of evangelical religion, admitted and advocated in every age of the church by all opponents of the ritual or hierarchical theory. As no man is a Christian unless the Spirit of Christ dwells in him, so no body of men is a church, except so far as it is organized, animated and controlled by the same Spirit. We may be bound to recognize men as Christians who are not really such, and we may be bound to recognize churches who are, in fact, not governed by the Spirit. But in both cases they are assumed to be what they profess. We might as well call a lifeless corpse a man, as a body without the Spirit of God a church. The one may be called a dead church, as a lifeless human body is called a dead man. Nevertheless the Spirit makes the church, as the soul makes the man. The Bible says that the church is a temple, because it is the habitation of God through the Spirit. It is the body of Christ, because animated by the Spirit of Christ. It is said to be one, because the Spirit is one. "For," says the apostle, "as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." It is the baptism, or indwelling of the Spirit, therefore, which constitutes the church one body. And as (so far as our present state of existence is concerned) where the soul is, there the body is, so in like manner, where the Spirit is, there is the church, and where the Spirit is not, the church is not. The motto inscribed on the banner which the early evangelical fathers raised against the assumption of ritualists was, UBI SPIRITUS DEI, IBI ECCLESIA. That banner Popes and Prelatists, Patriarchs and Priests have for a thousand years striven in vain to trample in the dust. It has been handed down from one band of witnesses for the truth to another, until it now waves over all evangelical Christendom. The dividing line between the two great contending parties in the church universal, is precisely this—Is the Church in its essential idea an external body held together by external bands, so that membership in the church depends on submission to a hierarchy? or

is it a spiritual body owing its existence and unity to the indwelling of the Spirit, so that those who have the Spirit of God are members of the church or body of Christ? The Papists say we are not in the church, because we are not subject to the Pope; we say that we are in the church if the Spirit of Christ dwells in us. Of course Dr. Thornwell believes all this as firmly as we do. He has as fully and clearly avowed this doctrine as any man among us. In the very latest published production of his pen, he says, "The idea of the Church, according to the Reformed conception, is the complete realization of the decree of election. It is the whole body of the elect considered as united to Christ their Head. As actually existing at any given time, it is that portion of the elect who have been effectually called to the exercise of faith, and made partakers of the Holy Ghost. It is, in other words, the whole body of existing believers. According to this conception, none are capable of being church members but the elect, and none are ever, in fact, church members, but those who are truly renewed. The Church is, therefore, the communion of saints, the congregation of the faithful, the assembly of those who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. That this conception is fundamental in all the Reformed Confessions, and among all the Reformed theologians worthy of the name, we will not insult the intelligence of our readers by stopping to prove. The Church was co-extensive with faith. As true faith in the heart will manifest itself by the confession of the mouth, it is certain that the children of God, wherever they have the opportunity, will be found professing their faith; and as there is no method of searching the heart, and discriminating real from false professors, but by the walk, all are to be accepted as true believers whose lives do not give the lie to their pretensions. The body of professors, therefore, is to be accepted as the Church of Christ, because the truly faithful are in it. The Gospel is never preached without converting some—these will profess their faith, and will vindicate to any society the name of a Church. As to those professors who are destitute of faith, they are not properly members of the Church; they are wolves among sheep; tares among the wheat; warts and excrescences upon the body. The visible Church is, accordingly, the society or congregation of those who profess the true religion; among whom the Gospel is faithfully preached, and the sacraments duly administered. And it is simply because such a society cannot be destitute of genuine believers that it is entitled to the name of the Church. Profession must be accepted in the judgment of men as equivalent to the possession of faith, and the body of professors must pass for saints, until hypocrites and unbelievers expose themselves." *

* *Southern Presbyterian Review* for April, 1860, p. 15.

This is the idea of the church almost *totidem verbis*, which was presented years ago in this journal. Dr. Thornwell derived his doctrine from the same source from which we drew ours, viz., the Scriptures and the Confessions of the Protestant churches, and writings of the Reformed theologians. This is the doctrine which was presented in few words on the floor of the General Assembly, where it was stated that the indwelling of the Spirit constitutes the church, so that where the Spirit is, there the church is. Dr. Thornwell, however, then denounced that doctrine. He said, speaking of his opponent, "His principle is no, no, no Presbyterianism; no, no, no churchism. He alleges that the Church is where the Holy Ghost is. Moderator, is not the Holy Ghost in the heart, in the soul of the individual? Who can conceive, where is the authority for believing, that the Holy Ghost dwells in the Church, in any other sense than as He dwells in the hearts of those who are members of the Church?" He went on at some length to represent the doctrine that where the Spirit is, there the church is, as destroying the visibility of the church, resolving it into an impalpable invisible communion. "It is idle," he argued, "to say that when the Apostle says God 'has set in the Church,' he is speaking of the invisible Church. Where would the apostles, and pastors, and teachers, etc., be in an invisible Church? The thing is preposterous, and yet to such resorts have good men been driven, in order to get rid of the force of the arguments which go to establish our views." "The brother from Princeton," against whom all this was directed, had not said one word against the visibility of the church; he had said nothing on the idea of the church, further than was contained in the simple statement, that the Spirit stands in the same relation to the church that the soul does to the body, as its organizing principle, and the source of its attributes and prerogatives. Dr. Thornwell fully believes that doctrine. He taught it clearly and publicly in the month of April last. That he denounced it as preposterous in the month of May is to be accounted for only by the exigencies of debate. It would be hard to hold a lawyer responsible for all the arguments he may urge for his client. Dr. Thornwell had undertaken to prove *that* to be no Presbyterianism which he and every other Presbyterian in the land fully believed. It was a mere passing phase of thought.

It has been strangely inferred that if we hold that all the attributes and prerogatives of the church arise from the indwelling of the Spirit, we must also hold that nothing relating to the organization of the church is prescribed in the word of God. It might as well be inferred from the fact that the soul fashions and informs the human body, that the body may at one time have the form of a man, and at another, the form of a beast. There are fixed laws assigned by God, according to

which all healthful and normal development of the body is regulated. So it is with regard to the church. There are fixed laws in the Bible, according to which all healthful development and action of the external church are determined. But as within the limits of the laws which control the development of the human body, there is endless diversity among different races, adapting them to different climes and modes of living, so also in the church. It is not tied down to one particular mode of organization and action, at all times and under all circumstances. Even with regard to doctrinal truth, we may hold that the Spirit dwells in the believer as a divine teacher, and that all true divine knowledge comes from his inward illumination, without denying that a divine, authoritative rule of faith is laid down in the word of God, which it is impossible the inward teaching of the Spirit should ever contradict. We may believe that the indwelling Spirit guides the children of God in the path of duty, without at all questioning the authority of the moral law as revealed in the Bible. A Christian, however, may believe and do a thousand things not taught or commanded in the Scriptures. He cannot rightfully believe or do anything contrary to the word of God, but while faithful to their teachings and precepts, he has a wide field of liberty of thought and action. It is precisely so with regard to the organization of the church. There are certain things prescribed, to which every church ought to conform, and many things as to which she is at liberty to act as she deems best for God's glory, and the advancement of his kingdom. All we contend for is that everything is not prescribed; that every mode of organization or action is not either commanded or forbidden; that we must produce a "Thus saith the Lord" for everything the church does. We must indeed be able to produce a "Thus saith the Lord" for everything, whether a truth, or a duty, or a mode of ecclesiastical organization or action, which we make obligatory on the conscience of other men. But our liberty of faith and action beyond the prescriptions of the word of God, is the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and which no man shall take from us.

What we hold, therefore, is, that the leading principles thus laid down in Scripture regarding the organization and action of the church, are the parity of the clergy, the right of the people, and the unity of the church. With respect to these principles, two things were asserted on the floor of the Assembly. First, that they are *jure divino*. That is, that they are clearly taught in the word of God, and intended to be of universal and perpetual obligation. By this is not meant either that they are essential to the being of the church, for nothing can be essential to the church which is not essential to salvation; nor is it meant that these principles may not, under certain circumstances, be less developed or called into action than in others. The right of the

people, for example, to take part in the government of the church, may be admitted, and yet the exercise of that right be limited by the ability to exercise it. We do not deny the right of the people in civil matters, when we deny the exercise of that right to minors, to felons, or to idiots. The other position assumed was, that the three principles just mentioned are the fundamental principles of Presbyterianism, in such sense as that those who hold those principles in their true intent are Presbyterians, and that those who deny them forfeit their claim to be so regarded.

That the above-mentioned principles are, in the sense stated, *jure divino*, may be proved, as we think, in very few words. If the Holy Spirit, as dwelling in the church, is the source of its several prerogatives, it follows that there can be no offices in the church, of divine authority, to which he does not call its members by imparting to them the appropriate gift. The apostle informs us, that the Spirit distributes his gift to each one as he wills. Apart from those sanctifying influences common to all the children of God, by which they are incorporated into the body of Christ, He made some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers. Some had the gift of speaking with tongues, others the gift of healing, others the gift of miracles, others of government, others of helpers. Of these offices thus created, some were extraordinary and temporary, others permanent. Of those connected with the ministry of the word, were the apostles, prophets, and presbyters. The question, therefore, whether there is any permanent class or order of ministers higher than these presbyters, depends on the question, whether the apostolic and prophetic offices were permanent or temporary. It is admitted that in the apostolic church the apostles and prophets were superior to presbyters. If, therefore, we have now apostles and prophets in the church, then there are still two orders of the clergy above ordinary ministers. But if there are now no such offices, then the parity of the clergy is a necessary consequence. That the apostolic and prophetic offices were temporary, is rendered certain from the fact that the peculiar gifts which made an apostle or a prophet are no longer imparted. An apostle was a man endued with plenary knowledge of the gospel by immediate revelation, and who was rendered infallible in the communication of that knowledge by the gift of inspiration. A prophet was a man who received partial revelations and occasional inspiration.

It is not necessary that we should stop to prove that such were the gifts of the apostles and prophets. It is proved by the fact that they claimed them, that they exercised them, that their claim was divinely authenticated and universally admitted, and that the possession of those gifts was essential to their authority as teachers and rulers, to

which all men were required to submit on the pain of perdition. It requires no proof that these gifts are no longer possessed by any order of men in the church, and therefore it requires no further proof that the apostolic and prophetic offices are no longer extant. This conclusion as to the temporary nature of those offices is confirmed: 1. By the consideration that there is no command to continue them. 2. That there is no specification of the qualifications to be required in those who sought them. 3. That there is no record of their continuation. They disappeared from the stage of history as completely as the prophets, judges, and high priests of the Old Testament economy. On the other hand, the gifts of teaching and ruling, which constituted a presbyter, are continued; the command to ordain such officers is on record; their qualifications are minutely laid down; the account of their appointment is found in the Scripture, and they continue in unbroken succession wherever the church is found. These presbyters are therefore the highest permanent officers of the church for which we have any divine warrant. If the church, for special reasons, sees fit to appoint any higher order, such as are found in bishops of the Lutheran church in Europe, and in the superintendents, clothed with presbyterial power (i. e., the powers of a presbytery), in the early church of Scotland, this is merely a human arrangement. The parity of the clergy is a matter of divine right. They all hold the same office, and have the same rights, so far as they depend on divine appointment.

As to the right of the people to take part in the government of the church, this also is a divine right. This follows because the Spirit of God, who is the source of all power, dwells in the people, and not exclusively in the clergy; because we are commanded to submit ourselves to our brethren in the Lord; because the people are commanded to exercise this power, and are upbraided when unfaithful or negligent in the discharge of this duty; because the gift of governing or ruling is a permanent gift; and because, in the New Testament we find the brethren in the actual recognized exercise of the authority in question, which was never disputed in the church until the beginning of the Dark Ages. This right of the people must, of necessity, be exercised through representatives. Although it might be possible in a small congregation for the brotherhood to act immediately, yet in such a city as Jerusalem, where there were five or ten thousand believers, it was impossible that government or discipline should be administered by the whole body of Christians. And when the churches of a province or of a nation, or of all Christendom, united for the decision of questions of general interest, the people must appear by their representatives or not appear at all. Under the Old Testament, in the assembly or congregation of the people, in the Synagogue and in the Sanhedrim, this principle of representation was by divine appointment

universally recognized. By like authority it was introduced into the Christian Church as a fundamental principle of its organization. This is the broad, scriptural, *jure divino* foundation of the office of ruling elder, an officer who appears with the same credentials, and with equal authority as the minister in all our church-courts, from the session to the General Assembly. The third principle above mentioned is the unity of the church. This unity is not merely a union of faith and of communion, not merely a fellowship in the Spirit, but a union of subjection, so that one part is subject to a larger, and a larger to the whole. This also is *jure divino*. 1. Because the whole church is made one by the indwelling of the Spirit. 2. Because we are commanded to be subject to our brethren. The ground of this subjection is not proximity in space, nor a mutual covenant or agreement, but the mere fact that they are our brethren, and therefore it extends to all brethren. 3. Because in the apostolic, as in the Old Testament Church, the whole body of professors of the true religion were thus united as one body. 4. Because by the instinct of Christian feeling the Church in all ages has striven after this union of subjection, and recognized its violation as inconsistent with the law of its constitution. This, again, by necessity and divine appointment, is a representative union, and hence the provincial, national and œcumenical councils which mark the whole history of the church. We hold, therefore, to a *jure divino* form of church government, so far as these principles go.

The second position assumed in reference to the points above stated was, that those principles constitute the true idea of Presbyterianism. Dr. Thornwell's second speech was devoted to ridiculing and refuting that position. He objected to it as altogether illogical. It was a definition, he said, without any single distinctive characteristic of the subject. Let us look, he said, at these principles. 1st. Parity of the clergy. Why, sir, this is not a distinctive mark of Presbytery. All the evangelical sects except the Episcopal hold to it. 2d. The power of the people. That is not distinctive of Presbyterianism. The Congregationalists carry this farther than we do. 3d. The unity of the church. Is this peculiar to us? Is it a peculiar element of our system? Rome holds it with a vehemence which we do not insist upon. "That Presbyterianism!" he exclaimed—"a little of everything and anything, but nothing distinctive."

This is extraordinary logic. And the more extraordinary, considering that Dr. Thornwell had just informed the Assembly that he had studied Aristotle and every other great master of the science; that he had probably the largest private library of works in that department in the country, and felt prepared to measure swords on that field with any man alive. We do not question either his learning or his skill. We only know that the merest tyro, with logic or without it,

can see the fallacy of his argument. He assumes that the only mode of definition is to state the genus of the subject and its specific difference. Thus we define God by saying that he is a Spirit, which states the genus or class of beings to which he belongs; and we distinguish him from all other spirits by saying he is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. Another method, however, equally legitimate and equally common, is to enumerate the attributes of the subject, which complete or individualize the idea. We may define man to be a rational creature, invested with a material body. Should any professor of logic ridicule this definition, and say it includes nothing distinctive, he would only show that his logic was in abeyance. Should he imitate Dr. Thornwell, he would say, "Rationality is no distinctive characteristic of man. God, angels, and demons are all rational. Neither is a dependent created nature such a characteristic. There are other creatures in the universe besides man. Nor is the possession of an organized body anything peculiar. Birds and beasts have bodies. Here, then, we have a little of everything and anything, and nothing peculiar. Is that a man? Nevertheless, so long as, in the sphere of our knowledge, man is the only rational creature invested with a living body, the above definition is perfectly logical, all the followers of the Stagirite to the contrary notwithstanding. Now, as the principles above stated, the parity of the clergy, the right of the people to a substantive part in the government of the church, and the subjection of one part of the church to a larger, and a larger to the whole, are recognized by Presbyterians, and are not found among Papists, Prelatists and Independents, or any other historical body of Christians, they are, in their combination, the characteristic or distinguishing features of the Presbyterian system.

Dr. Thornwell stated his own as an antagonistic theory of Presbyterianism. 1. That the church is governed by representative assemblies. 2. Those assemblies include two houses or two elements, the preaching and ruling elder. 3. The parity of the eldership, all elders, preaching and ruling, appearing in our church courts with the same credentials and having the same rights. 4. The unity of the church as realized in the representative principle.

It is obvious that these principles do not involve anything to distinguish Dr. Thornwell's system from that advocated on the other side. He entirely overlooked the main point and the only point in debate. It was asserted that the Boards are unscriptural and unlawful. They are unlawful, because not commanded in Scripture, and everything not commanded is forbidden. In opposition to this it was said that the principle, that every mode of organization or action is unlawful which is not prescribed in the word of God, is utterly anti-Presbyterian and unscriptural. In his rejoinder Dr. Thornwell does not say a word on

that point, on which the whole argument turned, but devoted all his strength to prove that "the brother from Princeton" is no Presbyterian. Suppose that to be true, what had it to do with the question? Our being no Presbyterian would not prove the Boards to be unlawful. But even as to that subordinate, irrelevant object, the speech was a failure. Every one of his four principles is involved in those stated on the other side. 1. The principle of representation, as we have seen, is of necessity included in the doctrine of the unity of the church, and the subjection of a part to the whole. This theory can be carried out only through representative assemblies. 2. The union of two elements in these church courts is also embraced in the assertion of the right of the people to take part in the government of the church, for this right can only be exercised through their representatives sitting as constituent elements in ecclesiastical courts. 3. The parity of the elders and ministers in these representative assemblies is also included in the one system as well as in others. 4. The unity of the church was avowed on both sides, and was not claimed as peculiar to either. This is not an after-thought. All these principles were presented years ago, in the tract, "What is Presbyterianism?" and shown to be involved in those which Dr. Thornwell repudiated as any just description of our system.

The true peculiarities of the new theory Dr. Thornwell left out of view in his rejoinder. Those principles are—1. A new doctrine concerning ruling elders. 2. The doctrine that all power in the church is joint, and not several. 3. That everything not prescribed in Scripture is forbidden. We shall say a few words on each of these points in their order.

First, as to the eldership. There are only two radically different theories on this subject. According to the one, the ruling elder is a layman; according to the other, he is a clergyman. According to the former, he belongs to a different order from the minister, holds a different office, has a different vocation and ordination. He is not a bishop, pastor, or teacher, but officially a ruler. According to the latter, the reverse is true. The ruling elder belongs to the same order with the minister. He is a bishop, pastor, teacher, and ruler. This is all the minister is. They have, therefore, the same office, and differ only as to their functions, as a professor differs from a pastor, or a missionary from a settled minister. It is to be noticed that the point of difference between these theories is not the importance of the office of ruling elder, nor its divine warrant. According to both views, the office is *jure divino*. The Spirit who calls one man to be a minister calls another to be an elder. The one office is as truly from Christ as the other. Nor do the theories differ as to the parity of elders and ministers in our church courts. Both enter those courts with the

same credentials, and have the same right to sit, deliberate and determine. The vote of the one avails as much as that of the other. On all these points the theories agree. The point of difference between them, which is radical, affecting the whole character of our system, relates to the nature of the office of the ruling elder. Is he a clergyman, a bishop, or is he a layman? Does he hold the same office with the minister, or a different one? According to the new theory the offices are identified. Everything said of presbyters in the New Testament, this theory applies equally to elders and ministers of the word. What constitutes identity of office if it be not identity of official titles, of qualifications, of vocation, of duties, of ordinations? This new doctrine makes all elders, bishops, pastors, teachers, and rulers. It applies all directions as to the qualifications and duties, as to election and ordination of presbyters, as much to the ruling elder as to the minister of the word. It therefore destroys all official distinction between them. It reduces the two to one order, class or office. The one has as much right to preach, ordain and administer the sacraments as the other. The conclusion cannot by possibility be avoided on the theory that elders are pastors, bishops, and teachers in the same sense with ministers.

The first objection to this theory is, that it is entirely contrary to the doctrine and practice of all the Reformed churches, and especially of our own. In those churches the ruling elder is a layman. He has a different office from the minister. He has different gifts, different training, duties, prerogatives, and ordination. The one is ordained by the minister, the other by the Presbytery. The one ministers in the word and sacraments, the other does not. The one is appointed specially to teach and to preach the gospel; the other to take part in the discipline and government of the church.

Secondly, in thus destroying the peculiarity of the office its value is destroyed. It is precisely because the ruling elder is a layman that he is a real power, a distinct element in our system. The moment you dress him in canonicals you destroy his power and render him ridiculous. It is because he is not a clergyman, it is because he is one of the people, engaged in the ordinary business of life, separated from the professional class of Ministers, that he is what he is in our church courts. Thirdly, This theory reduces the government of the church to a clerical despotism. Dr. Thornwell ridiculed this idea. He called it an argument *ad captandum*. He said it was equal in absurdity to the argument of a hard-shell Baptist, who proved that his sect would universally prevail from the text, "The voice of the turtle shall be heard in all the land." Turtles, said the Hard-shell, are to be seen sitting upon logs in all the streams, and as you pass they plunge into the water; therefore all men will do the same. Such, said

Dr. Thornwell, was the logic of the brother from Princeton. Whatever may be thought of the wit of this illustration, we cannot see that it proves much. Does it prove that all power in our church is not in the hands of ministers and elders? and if elders and ministers are all alike bishops and teachers, all of the same order, all clergymen, does it not follow that all power is in the hands of the clergy? But, says Dr. Thornwell, the people choose these elders. What of that? Suppose slaves had a right to choose (under a veto) their own masters, would they not be slaves still? If, according to the Constitution of the United States, the President, senators, representatives, heads of departments, judges, marshals, all naval and military men holding commissions, in short, all officers from the highest to the lowest (except overseers of the poor), must be clergymen, every one would see and feel that all power was in the hands of the clergy. It would avail little that the people choose these clergymen, if the clergy had the sole right to ordain—that is, to admit into their order. All power, legislative, executive and judicial, would be in their hands, the right of election notwithstanding. This is the government which the new theory would introduce into the church. This doctrine is, therefore, completely revolutionary. It deprives the people of all substantive power. The legislative, judicial and executive power, according to our system, is in church courts, and if these courts are to be composed entirely of clergymen, and are close, self-perpetuating bodies, then we have, or we should have, as complete a clerical domination as the world has ever seen. It need hardly be said that our fathers, and especially the late Dr. Miller, did not hold any such doctrine as this. There was no man in the church more opposed to this theory than that venerable man, whose memory we have so much reason to cherish with affectionate reverence. We do not differ from Dr. Miller as to the nature of the office of the ruling elder. The only point of difference between him and us relates to the method of establishing the divine warrant for the office. He laid stress on one argument, we on another. That is all. As to the importance, nature and divine institution of the office, we are faithful to his instructions. And this we understand to be the ground which our respected contributor in the April number of this *Review* intended to take. It is only as to the point just indicated that we could sanction dissent from the teachings of our venerated and lamented colleague.

Dr. Thornwell himself, in the last extremity, said that he did not hold the new theory. Then he has no controversy with us, nor we with him, so far as the eldership is concerned. The dispute is reduced to a mere logomachy, if the only question is whether the ruling elder is a presbyter. Dr. Thornwell asked, If he is not a presbyter, what right has he in the Presbytery? You might as well, he said, put any

other good man there. It is on all sides admitted that in the New Testament the presbyters are bishops—how then are we to avoid the conclusion that the ruling elder is a bishop, and therefore the same in office as the minister, and the one as much a clergyman as the other? This is the dilemma in which, as we understood, Dr. Thornwell endeavoured to place Dr. Hodge, when he asked him, on the floor of the Assembly, whether he admitted that the elder was a presbyter. Dr. Hodge rejoined by asking Dr. Thornwell whether he admitted that the apostles were deacons. He answered, No. But, says Dr. Hodge, Paul says he was a *διάκονος*. Oh, says Dr. Thornwell, that was in the general sense of the word. Precisely so. If the answer is good in the one case, it is good in the other. If the apostles being deacons in the wide sense of the word, does not prove that they were officially deacons, then that elders are presbyters in the one sense, does not prove them to be presbyters in the other sense. We hold, with Calvin, that the official presbyters of the New Testament were bishops; for, as he says, "Quicumque verbi ministerio funguntur, iis titulum episcoporum [Scriptura] tribuit." But of the ruling elders, he adds, "Gubernatores fuisse existimo seniores ex plebe delectos, qui censuræ morum et exercendæ disciplinæ una cum episcopis præessent." *Institutio*, etc. IV. 3. 8. This is the old, healthful, conservative doctrine of the Presbyterian Church. Ministers of the word are clergymen, having special training, vocation, and ordination; ruling elders are laymen, chosen from the people as their representatives, having, by divine warrant, equal authority in all church courts with the ministers.

The second point of difference between the new and old theories of Presbyterianism is, that all power in the church is joint, and not several. The objection to this doctrine is simply to the word *all*. It is admitted, and always has been admitted, that the ordinary exercise of the legislative, executive, and judicial authority of the church, is in church courts; according to our system, in sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and Assembly. About this there is no dispute. But, on the other hand, it is contended, that according to the theory and practice of our own, and of all other Presbyterian bodies, ordination to the sacred office confers the power or authority not only to preach the gospel, but to collect and organize churches, to administer the sacraments, and in the absence of a session, to decide on the qualifications of candidates for admission to those ordinances; and when need be, to ordain, as is done in the case of ruling elders. This is a power which our ministers and missionaries have, and always must exercise. It can never be denied by any who are not the slaves, instead of being the masters, of logic. On this point it is not necessary to enlarge.

The third point of difference between the two systems is the extent to which the liberty of the church extends in matters of government

and modes of operation. According to the old, and especially the genuine American form of Presbyterianism, while it is admitted that there is a form of government prescribed or instituted in the New Testament, so far as its general principles or features are concerned, there is a wide discretion allowed us by God, in matters of detail, which no man or set of men, which neither civil magistrates nor ecclesiastical rulers, can take from us. This is part of that liberty with which Christ has made us free, and in which we are commanded to stand fast. The other doctrine is the opposite of this. It is, that everything that is lawful as to the mode in which the church is to be organized, and as to the methods which she is to adopt in carrying on her work, is laid down in Scripture. It is not enough that it is not forbidden; it is not enough that it is in accordance with the principles laid down in the word of God. Unless it is actually commanded, unless we can put our finger on a "Thus saith the Lord," in its support, it is unlawful. God, it was said, has given the church a particular organization, a definite number of officers, courts, organs, agencies; and for us to introduce any other, or even any new combinations, is an indignity to him, and to his word. On this ground, as we have said, the Boards were pronounced unscriptural. Their abrogation was made a matter of duty. It was urged upon our conscience as demanded by our allegiance to God. It is our firm belief that there were not six men in the Assembly who held this doctrine. There were sixty who voted for some organic change in the Boards, but so far as we know, there were only two who took the ground of this superlative high-churchism. It is utterly repugnant to the spirit of the New Testament, to the practice of the church universal, to the whole character of Protestantism, and especially of our Presbyterianism; it is so preposterous and suicidal, that we have no more fear of its prevalence among us, than that the freemen of this country will become the advocates of the divine right of kings. We have no intention of discussing this question at length, which we deem altogether unnecessary. We shall content ourselves with a few remarks on two aspects of the case.

In the first place, this theory never has been, nor can be carried out, even by its advocates. Consistency would require them to repudiate all organizations, not Boards only, but Committees also, and confine the joint agency of the church to Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods and General Assemblies. They hold these only to be divinely instituted organs for joint action. And it is perfectly clear that if these be departed from, or if other agencies be adopted, the whole principle is given up. Accordingly, the first ground assumed by the advocates of the new theory, was that missionary operations could be carried on only by the Presbyteries. The law of God was said to forbid every-

thing else. When this was found impracticable, then it was discovered that a board or court of deacons was the divinely instituted agency, and the word of God was made to forbid any other. This, however, would not go. Then followed other discoveries, and at last it was found out that a committee was the thing. God permits a committee, but to institute a board is an act of rebellion. But what is the difference? A committee is no more commanded than a board. The one is as much a delegated body as the other. Both continue as a living organism after the Assembly appointing them is dissolved and dead. We were referred to the Committee of Church Extension as an illustration of the radical difference between the two organizations. The only difference, however, is that one is larger than the other. There is not a single principle involved in the one, which is not involved also in the other.

It may be said, and it was said in the last extremity, that an executive committee appointed directly by the Assembly, is a simpler device than a board, and that the church is limited in her choice of agencies to what is absolutely necessary. But, in the first place, this is an admission that everything necessary is not prescribed in Scripture which is contrary to the theory. In the second place, the Committee of Church Extension, which was held up as the model, is not the simplest possible, by a great deal. A single executive officer is a simpler device than an executive committee, and much more so than a Committee of thirty or forty members. In the third place, when it is said we are forbidden to adopt any means not absolutely necessary, the question arises, Necessary for what? For doing the work? or, for doing it in the best and most effectual manner? If the latter, which is the only rational view of the matter, then again the whole principle is abandoned; for it must rest with the judgment of the church to decide what measures are best adapted for her purpose, and this is all the discretion any body desires. It is obvious that the principle advocated by these brethren is one which they themselves cannot carry out. The church is getting tired of such hair-splitting. She is impatient of being harassed and impeded in her great operations by such abstractions. If, however, the principle in question could be carried out, what would be the consequence? Of course we could have no church-schools, colleges or theological seminaries; no appliances for the education of the heathen, such as all churches have found it necessary to adopt. The Boards of Directors of our Seminaries must be given up. No one pretends that they are commanded in Scripture, or that they are absolutely necessary to the education of the ministry. We had educated ministers before Seminaries were thought of. So far as we heard, not a word was said in the Assembly in answer to this *argumentum ad hominem*. The brethren who denounced

the Board of Missions as unscriptural had nothing to say against the boards of the Seminaries. Any one sees, however, that if the one is unlawful, the others must be.

The grand objection urged against this new theory, the one which showed it to be not only inconsistent and impracticable, but intolerable, was, that it is, in plain English, nothing more or less than a device for clothing human opinion with divine authority. The law of God was made to forbid not only what it says, but what may be inferred from it. We grant that what a man infers from the word of God binds his own conscience. But the trouble is, that he insists that it shall bind mine also. We begged to be excused. No man may make himself the lord of my conscience, much less will any man be allowed to make himself lord of the conscience of the Church. One man infers one thing, another a different, from the Bible. The same man infers one thing to-day, and another thing to-morrow. Must the church bow her neck to all these burdens? She would soon be more trammelled than the church in the wilderness, with this infinite difference—the church of old was measurably restricted by fetters which God himself imposed; the plan now is to bind her with fetters which human logic or caprice forges. This she will never submit to.

Dr. Thornwell told us that the Puritans rebelled against the doctrine that what is not forbidden in Scripture is allowable. It was against the theory of liberty of discretion, he said, our fathers raised their voices and their arms. We always had a different idea of the matter. We supposed that it was in resistance to this very doctrine of inferences they poured out their blood like water. In their time, men inferred from Romans xiii. 1 ("Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation"), the doctrine of passive submission. From the declaration and command of Christ, "The Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do," they inferred the right of the church to make laws to bind the conscience. On this ground tories and high-church men sought to impose on the Church their trumpery vestments, and their equally frivolous logical deductions. It was fetters forged from inferences our fathers broke, and we, their children, will never suffer them to be rewelded. There is as much difference between this extreme doctrine of divine right, this idea that everything is forbidden which is not commanded, as there is between this free, exultant Church of ours, and the mummied forms of mediæval Christianity. We have no fear on this subject. The doctrine need only be clearly propounded to be rejected.

INDEX.

A.

Abolitionist, no man made one by the study of the Scriptures, 384, 456.
Action, supposed distinction between rules of, and principles of, 184.
Admonition, judicial, distinguished from non-judicial, 346.
Almsgiving, scripture doctrine of, 506.
Ambrose, testimony of, as to functions of Bishops, 121.
Anathema, not employed in Protestant Church, 343.
Ancyra, Council of, as to the ordaining rights of Presbyters, 125.
Apostates, mode of dealing with, 370.
Apostleship, the distinctive functions of the, 562; no personal successors to distinctive office of the, 562; feature common to it with the ordinary ministry of the Word, 563.
Appeals, ought not to make inferior courts parties, 315, 374; nature of, 316: principle of law of, 317; ought to be confined to injured parties, 335, 275.
Appearance, in cases of appeal ought to be defined, 307.
Aristotle, his conception of magnanimity, 545.
Arles, Council of, as to functions of Bishops, 121.
Assemblies, representative, ought to consist of two chambers, 61; Presbyterian, consist virtually of two chambers, 63, 140, 276; Presbyterian, are also courts, 63; government by representative, a distinctive principle of Presbyterianism, 136, 234; government by, composed of Elders, a distinctive principle of Presbyterianism, 138; Ministers components of, as Ruling Elders, 219, 234; genius and spirit of representative, 533.

B.

Bacon, Lord, doctrine of, as to force of negative instances in establishing axioms, 106.
Baptism, benefits of infant, 331; extent of validity of, 345.
Baptized Non-professors, not proper subjects of judicial prosecution, 326, 337; real relation of, to the Church, 329; peculiar advantages of, 330: effects of excommunicating, 332; not self-excommunicated, 332; true status of, 333, 339; state of the question as to relation of, to discipline, 337; how the Church should treat them, 341; spiritual condition of, 341, 342: doctrine that they are not subjects of judicial censure maintained by the Reformed Churches, 349; and by ablest Reformed Theologians, 357.
Basle, Confession of, as to the end of excommunication, 352.
Beneficence, Systematic, scripture doctrine as to, 505.
Berkeley, Bp., reduction by, of principles of morality, 365.
Bishops, teaching and Ruling Elders were scriptural, 119; use of the term, in age succeeding the apostolic, 119; how they came to be Prelates, 123, 124; and Presbyters one, 139.
Boards. [See Church-Boards.]
Breckinridge, Dr. R. J., his Christian Pastor reviewed, 15; tribute to, 15, 49; his speeches on the Ruling Eldership reviewed, 43.
Brougham, Lord, view of, as to necessity of checks in representative government, 61.
Butler, Bp., reduction by, of the principles of morality, 365.

C.

Call of the Minister, prominent theories as to, 23; grounds of, 24; evidence of, 24; is immediately from God, 24, 32, 194, 568; common error as to the persons who may be the recipients of, 27; urging the question of, upon the young unscriptural, 30; proofs of, 32; a supernatural conviction of conscience the first proof of, 32; calculations of expediency no element in the proofs of, 33; the approbation of the Christian people the second proof of, 35; three theories as to the form in which second proof of, may be expressed, 38; the judgment of the Presbytery the third proof of, 40, 194; effect of low views as to, 499; necessity of a Divine, 567.
Calvin, doctrine of, as to limitations of church-power, 187, 247; testimony of, that Ruling Elders are Presbyters, 282; practice of, as to ecclesiastical inquest, 307; doctrine of, as to distinction between excommunication and anathema, 343; doctrine of, as to the proper subjects of judicial discipline, 357.
Capital, danger resulting from relation of, to free labour, 540.
Carthage, Council of, as to right of Elders to ordain Presbyters, 125; as to mode of ordaining Bishops, 129.
Cases, without process, 308, 309, 324, 368.
Censures, forms of, 343, 354; distinction between, 324, 343, 356; subjects of, 329, 336, 337; specific difference between, and instruction, 346; are not the seed of regeneration, 349; administered by the Reformed Church to professed believers, 350; degrees of, 354, 356.
Chalmers, Dr. T., his view of sustentation criticised, 485.

CHANNING, DR., his definition of slavery, 408; views of, as to the importance of individual development, 425.
CHECKS, the system of, in Presbyterian government, 63, 140, 276.
CHILDREN, of believers, as related to the promises, 340.
CHRIST, supreme source of authority and power in the Church, 98, 138, 209; relation of the State to, 517, 549, 551; the supreme ruler of nations, 552.
CHRISTIAN, every, a member of a missionary society as a member of the Church, 223, 237, 238.
CHRISTIANITY, forms of, as well as principles of, divinely revealed, 163; slavery, in itself, not contrary to genius and spirit of, 428, 457.
CHURCH, THE, officers of, 15–142; not founded upon the ministry, 19; distinction between essence of, and visible form of, 20; approbation of, second proof of a call to the ministry, 35; power of, where lodged, 97, 272; source of authority of officers of, 98, 138; government of, whence derived, 101; government of, should be conducted by assemblies of Elders, 133, 138; principles of the polity of the Presbyterian, 135; unity of, a fundamental principle of Presbyterianism, 135; government of, by representative assemblies a distinctive principle of Presbyterianism, 62, 136, 234; government of, by assemblies of Elders a distinctive principle of Presbyterianism, 138, 219; power of, primarily in the body, and exercised through courts, a distinctive principle of Presbyterianism, 138; distinction between essence of, and completeness of, 139, 293; operations of, 145; argument against boards of, 145; permanent officers of, 148; courts of, what, 149; duty of, as such, to do all the work assigned her by Christ, 158, 225, 240; cannot delegate her functions, 160; nature of power of, 163, 182, 193, 218, 219, 236, 240, 473; great error of, reliance upon her own understanding, 163; maintenance and propagation of the truth the great business of, 165; expediency no measure of duty to, 167; the Scriptures the only law of, 167, 175, 383, 456, 469, 472, 475; boards not necessary to, 168, 186, 192, 207; faith the great principle of all the operations of, 173; question of discretionary power of, considered, 182, 193, 218, 244, 259, 292; liberty of, what, 183, 233; distinction between a government of, by principles and by rules, considered, 184; completeness of organization of, for all legitimate ends, 186, 192, 209, 472; limitations upon power of, 187, 210, 219, 222, 225, 240; power of, ministerial and declarative, 193, 219, 236, 477; adequate to conduct Foreign Missions without aid of extraneous organizations, 194, 209; constituted with special reference to missionary operations, 208; a mere instrumentality employed by Christ, 209, 469; as a positive institute must show a warrant for all she does, 210, 219, 470; difference of view as to Divine origin of government of, 218; *jus Divinum* theory as to government of, consistent with catholicity, 139, 219, 293, 463; has no opinions, has a faith, 219, 384, 456, 472, 475; powers of, cannot be delegated, 222, 488; is a missionary society, 223; as organized, is a society for all spiritual purposes, 224; measure of power of, as a missionary society, 224; things necessary to the discharge of work of, 224; systematic giving, as a part of worship, a great principle of, 224; statement that the Church is, where the Holy Ghost is, defective, 233, 261; perfect organization of, needed for the perfect working of, 233; every member of, as such, a member of a missionary society, 223, 237, 238; regulative and constitutive principles of government of, distinguished, 252; how government of, is prescribed in Scripture, 252; presence of the Spirit does not necessarily constitute, 261; the ministry and ordinances indispensable elements of the outward, 262; relation of the people to government of, 59, 101, 269, 276; applications for leave to withdraw from membership of, considered, 323, 369; visible, consists of two classes, 339; conception of, by the Reformed Church, 350; nature and office of, 382, 449, 469, 473, 477, 500; relation of, to slavery, 381, 500; not a society of universal good, 382; not at liberty to speculate, 384; has no right to speak where the Scriptures are silent, 384, 385; has no authority to settle political questions, 439, 450; cannot adjudicate between claims of rival governments, 440, 450; province of, and that of the State, distinct, 440, 449, 554; schism of, distinguished from separation of, 441; advantages of confining to national lines, 441, 453, 465; unity of, as catholic not necessarily formal, 452; relation of, to secular societies, 467, 473; relation of, to societies for moral Reform, 469; the ends of, 469, 477; the laws of, 469; mission of, 473, 502; efforts of, should spring from life, not machinery, 483; principle of, that the strong should assist the weak, 484; evangelization the great duty of, 494.
CHURCH-BOARDS, argument against, 145; substitutes for voluntary societies, 147, 157; unconstitutionality of, 148; officers of, as such, neither ministers, elders nor deacons, 149, 211; are not mere committees, 150; are virtually ecclesiastical courts, 150, 211, 220, 240; undue power vested in, 151, 156; tend to a virtual Prelacy, 156; irresponsibility of, 157; centralizing tendency of, 158, 444; violate great principle that the Church as such ought to do the work assigned her, 158; confidential agents of the Church, 159; difference between, and Committees, 162, 225, 238, 240; unscripturalness of, 163; the Scriptures silent as to, 164; prevent a knowledge by the Church of the missionaries sent out, 165; expediency and necessity of, discussed, 166; are unnecessary, 168, 186, 192, 207, 495; argument that energies of the Church are concentrated by, answered, 169; plea that nothing would be done without, answered, 171; principle of, not true mean betwixt latitudinarianism and ultraism, 178; argument for, from fact that they are established institutions, answered, 179; argument for, from discretionary power of the Church, answered, 182; question as to, not one as to circumstantials, 188; question of, involves that of the organization of the Church, 218; what they are, 220; are organisms, not organs, 220; not circumstantial details, 221; relation of, to the General Assembly that of vicars, 221; principles of action of, 222; paid membership in reprobated, 223, 240; principles opposed to, 224; indirectly re-

lated to the Church, 225; opposition to, not innovation, 225; question of authority for, 233, 259; Church exercises illegitimate power in constituting, 237; opposed to simplicity of organization, 238, 495; question of, in relation to Presbyterianism, discussed, 242; position of Scotch Free Church as to, 294; position of Southern Presbyterian Church as to, 443.

CIRCUMSTANCES, which fall within the discretionary power of the Church, 189, 219, 246, 251; Church-Boards not in category of, 221.

CLERGY, a Popish word, offensive to Presbyterians, 273, 274; sense of the term, 277, 284.

COLONIZATION, speech on African, 472.

COMMISSIONS, nature and power of, 225, 487.

COMMITTEES, functions of, 150; distinction between, and Boards, 162, 225, 238, 240; ends answered by, 224; necessary circumstances of church-action, 246, 259.

COMMON FAME, explicit law in regard to, needed, 304.

COMMONWEALTH, the principle of a free, 57; the Presbyterian Church a free, 62; when magnanimous, 546.

CONFESSION OF GUILT, case of, by a party, 308, 368.

CONSCIENCE, the testimony of, the first proof of a call to the ministry, 32.

COURTS, Presbyterian assemblies are, 63; Church-power to be exercised through organized, a principle of Presbyterianism, 138; distinguished from conventions of Christian gentlemen, 472; of the Church, what, 149; of the Church are Divine institutions, 219; are organisms, not organs merely, of the Church, 221; of the Church cannot delegate their powers, 222; composed of two classes belonging to one order a distinctive principle of Presbyterianism, 234; composed of rulers only, 234; lower, ought not to be made parties in judicial cases, 315, 374; members of lower ought, in judicial trials, to sit in upper, 318; relation of, to one another, 318; objections to lower sitting in upper in judicial trials, answered, 319; specific difference of modes of removing a cause from lower to higher, 334.

CUNNINGHAM, PRINCIPAL WM., doctrine of, as to discretionary power of the Church, 248; doctrine of, as to the place of the people in church-government, 270.

CYPRIAN, letters of, referred to for early use of the term BISHOP, 120; testimony of, as to mode of ordaining Bishops, 129.

D.

DEACONS, how they came to be preachers, 122; illustration of practical necessity of, 154; may act for the Church at large, 155, 199; entire secular business of the Church entrusted to, 201.

DEFINITION, elements of a, 263.

DEMISSION, of the ministry, when justifiable, 499.

DIRECTORY FOR WORSHIP, position of, as to the subjects of excommunication, 355.

DISCIPLINE, Church, 298; Revised Book of, 299; redundancies of old Book of, exscinded, 301; diffuseness of old Book of, remedied, 302; omissions of old Book of, supplied, 303; implications of old Book of, explicitly enunciated, 303; omitted details in execution of provisions of old Book of, supplied, 308; omissions of old Book of, as to offences committed in presence of a court, supplied, 309; omission of old Book of, as to the charge of a suspended minister, supplied, 310; privileges restricted by old Book of, extended, 310; anomalies and incongruities of old Book of, removed, 310; defective definition of offences by old Book of, corrected, 310; defective definition by old Book of, as to standard for determining offences, corrected, 312; position of old Book of, as to partisan attitude of inferior courts in appeals, changed, 315; omission of old Book of, as to withdrawal from communion of the Church, supplied, 322; narrower and wider senses of the term, 326; provision of old Book of, as to baptized non-professors, changed, 325; as a privilege, or a disability, 326; nature and ends of, 328.

DISCUSSION, effects of, 175.

DOCTRINE, more important than church-government, 293.

DOUBT, valid office of, 177.

DUTY, as conditioned by relations, 512.

E.

EDUCATION, the Church must take charge of, if religion be excluded from, 497; incorporation of true religion with, a great problem of the country, 498; distinction between a preliminary, and a professional, 560.

EDUCATION, COMMITTEE OF, limitations upon office of, 444.

ELDERS. [See Ruling Elders.]

ELDER, the New Testament, proved not to have been simply a preacher, 140.

ELDERSHIP, parity of the, a distinctive principle of Presbyterianism, 132, 234.

ELECTION, decree of, runs largely in the family line, 340.

EPIPHANIUS, quoted as to existence of Prelatic theory of ordination in the early Church, 129.

EVANGELIST, THE, an extraordinary, but not necessarily a temporary, officer, 18; office of, essential and peculiar to the Presbyterian system, 18; office of, makes the Presbyterian pre-eminently a missionary Church, 18.

EXCOMMUNICATION, nature of, 329; distinction between, and suspension, 343.

EXPEDIENCY, no measure of duty to the Church, 167.

F.

FAITH, the great principle of all church-operations, 173; the condition of the benefit of discipline, 328, 329; obedience to the, what, 565.

FASTING, import of, 520.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, nature of a, 527, 529; perfidy the great sin of a, 528; good faith the bond of a, 530.

FIRMILIAN, testimony of, as to functions of Elders, 126.

FRANCE, REFORMED CHURCH OF, doctrine of, as to the subjects of judicial discipline, 355; position of, as to the withdrawal of apostates, 370.

FREEDOM, nature of true, 418, 430.

G.

GIVING, SYSTEMATIC, a great principle of the Church, 224; a part of religious worship,

224, 238, 506; a privilege as well as a duty, 506; great principle as to, 508.
Golden Rule, The, applicability of, to slavery, 428, 457, 458, 544.
Government, a representative, distinguished from a democratic, 58, 100, 276; principles of that of the Presbyterian Church, 62, 135, 219, 224, 234; distinction between one of principles and one of rulers, considered, 184; of the Church is of Divine origin, 218; regulative and constitutive principles of, distinguished, 252, 292; end of civil, 275; end of that of the Church, 276; relative importance of, and doctrine, 293; civil, a Divine ordinance, 514; structure of that of the United States, 525; true theory of parliamentary, 534; difficulty of constructing a free, 546.

H.

Heidelberg Catechism, doctrine of, as to the subjects of judicial discipline, 353.
High-Churchism, repudiated, 139, 219, 293, 463.
Hodge, Dr. Charles, article of, on Presbyterianism reviewed, 242; tribute to the abilities of, 243; doctrine of, as to the discretionary power of the Church, 250; doctrine of, as to inferences from Scripture, 255; his scheme of Presbyterianism, 261; doctrine of, as to the part of the people in church-government, 269; doctrine of, as to the office of the Ruling Elder, 274; argument of, to prove the Ruling Elder not to be a Presbyter, 281; sermon of, on the support of the ministry, noticed, 482; report of, as to ecclesiastical Commissions, commended, 486.
Holy Spirit, The, the immediate author of a call to the ministry, 41, 194, 568; presence of, does not necessarily constitute a Church, 261.
Humility, nature of, 546.

I.

Ignatius, epistle of, to Polycarp referred to as to functions of a Bishop, 120.
Indifference, as to what may prove true, a condition of inquiry concerning truth, 177.
Inferences, necessary, from Scripture of equal authority with it, 255; logical principles of, necessary, 315; Westminster Standards not mere, from Scripture, 366.
Inquest, Ecclesiastical, principle of, expounded, 304, 371; the principle of, not tyrannical, 371; principle of, has a noble history, 372.
Ireland, Church of, testimony of, that Ruling Elders are Presbyters, 281.
Issue, to be joined in judicial trials, 307.

J.

Jerome, quoted as to mode of selecting preachers in the apostolic Church, 119; testimony of, as to functions of Bishops, 121.
Jews, The, in what the bondage of, consisted, 183, 254.
Jurisdiction, Appellate, the end of, 327.
Jus Divinum, of church-government, 21, 139, 218, 219, 252, 260, 268, 292, 293.

K.

Keys, of the Church, what, 270, 346.

L.

Labour, dangers resulting from relation of, to capital, 540.
Laity, meaning of the term, 277, 283.
Laodicea, Council of, as to the functions of Bishops, 121.
Liberality, Scripture doctrine of, 505.
Liberty, Christian, 183, 233, 254, 258, 312, 418, 430, 470, 552.
Lieber, Dr., doctrine of, as to operation of the representative principle, 59.
Liturgies, are circumstances not essential to church-worship, 247.

M.

Magistrate, Civil, has no jurisdiction in the domain of religion, 552.
Magnanimity, nature of, 545.
Mamelukes, peculiarity of kingdom of, 340.
Mankind, divided into three classes, 340.
Marriage, with a deceased wife's sister forbidden by the Presbyterian Standards, 493; adhesion to the law as to, or its excision from the Constitution, necessary, 494.
McCosh, Dr. James, view of, as to the effect upon a State of an effete religion, 516.
McQueen, Rev. A., case of, before the General Assembly of 1847.
Memorial, allowable in bringing irregularities of lower courts to notice of the higher, 310; a, as to the relation of the State to Christ, 549.
Miller, Dr. Samuel, quoted, as to necessity of double representation in church-courts, 64; testimony of, that Ruling Elders are Presbyters, 288.
Milton, views of, as to a free Commonwealth, 56.
Ministers, the call of, 15; servants, not lords of the Church, 19; relation of, to institutions of learning, 26; immediate ground of the call of, 24–32; without charge have no right to rule in the Church, 42, 70; constitute one class of representatives in Presbyterian assemblies, 63; Presbyterian government not exclusively in hands of, 64; are checks upon Elders in church-courts, 65; as alone they cannot call a meeting of Presbytery, alone they cannot regularly constitute it, 73; when pastors, are representatives of the people equally with Ruling Elders, 102; as teachers are not rulers, 118; reason of their being entitled to double honour, 120; right of rule pertains to, not as Ministers, but as Elders, 132; parity of, essential to Presbyterianism, 148, 156; sustain same representative relation to the Church with Ruling Elders, 277, 292; duty of, as to political matters, 511, 513; distinction between, as ministers and as citizens, 472, 513; qualifications of, for usefulness, 557, 571; ambassadors of God, 573; encouragements of, 577.
Ministry, The, what, as permanent, it includes, 19; fitness for, what, 28; claims of, not to be urged on the young, 30; prayer the great means of increasing, 30; means of preventing the induction of unfit men into, 31; an indispensable element of the visible Church, 262; mode of furnishing the support of, discussed, 483; impolicy of the Church as a whole furnishing the support of, 484; demission of, should be allowed in certain cases, 499; relation of, to political questions, 511, 513; reasons for the education of, 560; three orders in, a fiction, 562; authority of, 563; permanence of, 564; necessity of, 564; immediate end of, 565; importance of the duties of, 566; ultimate design of, 566; necessity of a Divine call

to, 567; qualifications and duties of, 557, 568–575; duty of the people to furnish the support of, 576.
Missions, Domestic, true mode of conducting, 240, 443.
Missions, Foreign, relation of the Church to, 194, 208, 223; relation of, to experimental religion, 508.
Morality, fundamental principles of, 364; distinctions of, are natural, not supernatural, 365.
Moral Reform, relation of the Church to societies for, 469.

N.

Negro, The, a descendant of Adam, 542.

O.

Offences, twofold classification of, 303; committed in presence of court, 309, 368; definition of, 310; standard for determining, 311, 312, 364.
Officers, Church, 15–142; treatise on extraordinary and ordinary, greatly needed, 17; question as to continuance of extraordinary, 17; all extraordinary, not necessarily temporary, 18; source of authority of, 98; powers and duties of, prescribed in Scriptures, 101; permanent, 148; not a rank, nor an order, 277.
Operations, of the Church, 145.
Order, preachers and Ruling Elders one as to, 119, 234, 288, 290, 292; office-bearers do not constitute an, 277.
Orders, historical origin of sacrament of, 129.
Ordinances, an indispensable element of the visible Church, 262.
Ordination, to the ministry *sine titulo*, considered, 31, 37, 41; incorrect theories as to, in the Presbyterian Church, 78; theories as to, in other Churches, 80; doctrine of the Reformers as to, not developed, 89; nature of, discussed, 91, 130; Romanist theory as to, 92; Anglican theory as to, 92; Presbyterian theory as to, 93; Ruling Elders have the right to participate in that of Ministers, 78, 95, 115, 124, 132; pertains not to several, but joint power, 103, 291; historical argument for right of Ruling Elders to impose hands in that of Ministers, 125; apparent testimonies against that view of, explained, 126; causes for lapse of imposition of hands by Ruling Elders in that of Ministers, 127; operation of the Prelatic theory of, in early Church, 128.
Owen, Dr. John, referred to for a satisfactory exposition of 1 Tim. v. 17, 118; doctrine of, as to the circumstances falling within the discretion of the Church, 189; remark of, as to the succession in Christ's kingdom, 340; doctrine of, as to the relation of baptized children to church discipline, 360.

P.

Paley, argument of, to show the ethical insufficiency of the Scriptures, 314; definition of slavery by, 414.
Pardovan, doctrine of, as to the proper subjects of judicial discipline, 365.
Parochial Schools, when necessary, 497.
Parties, case of accused, evading trial, 307; case of, confessing guilt, 308, 368; permission to, to testify, 310; employment of counsel by an accused, 310; injured, the only proper appellants, 335, 375.
Pastors, term, applied in Scripture as well to Ruling Elders as to preachers, 119.
People, The, relation of, to government of the Church, 59, 101, 269, 276; relation of, to representative government, 534.
Politics, relation of the pulpit to, 511, 513.
Posidonius, testimony of, as to the relation of Elders to preaching, 121.
Power, of the Church, where lodged, 97, 272; primarily in body of the Church, and exercised through courts, 138; of the Church, what, 163, 182, 187, 193, 236, 240, 272, 276; measure of that of the Church as a missionary society, 224; distinction between joint, and several, 141, 290.
Prayer, the great means of increasing the ministry, 30.
Preachers, relation of, to the Ruling Eldership, 118; distinguished from Ruling Elders, 235; province of, as to political questions, 511; qualifications of, 557, 559, 571; reasons for education of, 560; counsels to young, 561; duties of, 568.
Prelacy, account of historical of, 129; doctrine of, as to church-power, 222.
Presbyterian, narrower and wider senses of the term, 135.
Presbyterianism, charitableness of, 21; *Jus Divinum* of, 21, 218, 252, 260, 268; government of, a Commonwealth, 56, 62; government by free, representative assemblies a distinctive principle of, 62; principle of two chambers in deliberative assemblies characteristic of, 63; assemblies of, judicial as well as deliberative, 63; involves a system of checks in the governing assemblies, 63; analogy of, what, 67; stands or falls with the distinction between teaching and Ruling Elders, 125; the principles of, 135, 224; would be approved by Paul, 233; peculiar and distinctive principles of, 234; Dr. Hodge's definition of, criticised, 261; distinction between fundamental and distinctive principles of, 262; Dr. Hodge's theory of, examined, 268.
Presbyters, definition of, 116; as such, not preachers but rulers, 104, 118; Ruling Elders proved to be, from Presbyterian Standards, 104; Ruling Elders proved to be, from the Scriptures, 106; Ruling Elders proved to be the, of Scripture, 115; as such not preachers, 117; how they came to be preachers, 122, 124; in the early Church took part in ordination of Bishops, 125; and Bishops one, 139, 288; are of two classes and one order, 234, 288, 290; parity of teaching and ruling, as Presbyters, distinctive of Presbyterianism, 235; distinction between, as teaching and as ruling, 235; Ruling Elders proved to be, by the testimony of the Reformed Churches, 281.
Presbytery, The, judgment of, is final proof of a call to the ministry, 40; quorum of, what, 44, 48; essence of, what, 45; complete constitution of, what, 46; decision of General Assembly that, in a settled condition of the Church, a quorum of, may be had without Ruling Elders, 44, 46, 133; decision of Assembly as to quorum of, contradicts the analogy of Presbyterianism, 56, 133; ought not to be constituted without Ruling Elders, because a special meeting of, cannot be called without their concurrence, 72; constituting, without Ruling Elders authorized by no positive law, 74; competent to conduct the work of Foreign Missions, 196, 212; each, responsible for cultivation of its own mis-

sionary field, 240; the strong, ought to assist the weak, 484.
PRESCRIPTION, the force of, what, 51, 179.
PRIDE, nature of, 545.
PROCESS, judicial, not a means of conversion, 329; cases without, 308, 309, 324, 368.
PROFANENESS, the sin of, 537.
PROFESSION, of faith essential to the visible Church, 339, 351.
PROSECUTION, baptized non-professors not subjects of judicial, 326, 338; proper subjects of judicial, 329, 337; doctrine of Reformed Church as to applicability of judicial, to baptized non-professors, 349.
PROTESTANTISM, principle of, as to church-power, 186.
PULPIT, relation of, to politics, 511, 513.
PURITANS, doctrine of, as to the limitation of church-power, 222; doctrine of, as to inferences from Scripture, 255.

Q.

QUORUM, of a Presbytery, what, 44.
QUICK, his Synodicon cited as to process of censure, 355.

R.

REASON, prevalence of, the great desideratum in a deliberate assembly, 58, 534.
REDEMPTION, a supernatural mystery, 365.
REFORMATIONS, gradual progress of all, 146.
REFORMED CHURCH, THE, held Ruling Elders to be Presbyters, 281; doctrine of, as to applicability of judicial discipline to baptized non-professors, 349; conception of, as to the nature of the Church, 350; doctrine of, as to the forms and degrees of censure, 354.
RELIGION, the State ought to have the true, 516; essentially free and spontaneous, 518; as to the citizens of the State a sanction and not a law, 519.
REPRESENTATION, true significance of principle of, 59; principle of, is characteristic of Presbyterian government, 62; double, is the analogy of the Presbyterian system, 67; nature of, 100; in assemblies, a principle of Presbyterianism, 136.
REPRESENTATIVE, a, distinguished from a delegate or deputy, 98, 275, 536; import of office of a, 100; assemblies, as realizing unity, a principle of Presbyterianism, 136, 235; assemblies, composed of Elders, a principle of Presbyterianism, 138; government, a distinctive principle of Presbyterianism, 234; assemblies, genius and spirit of, 533.
RIGHTS, ultimately traceable to duties, 426; contingent, what, 427; human, not a fixed but a fluctuating quantity, 460; when exercise of primordial, by society is justifiable, 535.
ROME, CHURCH OF, mode by which she realizes unity, 136, 235; dilemma as to headship of, 136.
RULING ELDERS, are Presbyters, 44, 104, 106, 115, 279; may constitute a Presbytery without ministers in extraordinary cases, 44; doctrine that a Presbytery may be regularly constituted without, contradicts Presbyterianism, 56, 133; are one class of representatives in Presbyterian assemblies, 63; Presbyterian government not exclusively in hands of, 65; are checks upon Ministers in church-courts, 63; importance of office of, to liberties of the Church, 67; dangers attending constitution of church-courts in absence of, 70; Presbytery ought not to be constituted without, because a special meeting cannot be called without concurrence of, 72; constitution of Presbytery without, authorized by no positive law, 74; absence of, not provided for in the law as to the quorum of a Presbytery, 75; right of, to impose hands at the ordination of Ministers, 78, 95, 115, 124, 132; nature of office of, 96, 158, 139, 274; false view of, as creatures of the people, 96; source of authority of, 97; are representatives, not deputies, 98, 275, 292; likeness and difference between, and pastors, as representatives, 102; as members of Presbytery have right to every part of the Presbyterial act of ordination, 103; theory that they are not Presbyters refuted, 103; sources of proof that they are Presbyters, 103; proved to be Presbyters from Presbyterian Standards, 104; proved to be Presbyters from the Scriptures, 106; proved to be the Presbyters of Scripture, 115; how they came to be preachers, 122, 124; found in churches of Northern Africa in fourth century, 123; right of, to impose hands at ordination of ministers proved by historical facts, 125; testimonies apparently inconsistent with right of, to impose hands at ordination of Ministers, explained, 126; causes for lapse of imposition of hands by, at ordination of Ministers, 127; resolutions as to office and rights of, 132; equal, as rulers, to Ministers, 132, 290; government by representative assemblies composed of, a distinctive principle of Presbyterianism, 138; two classes of, 140, 234; duties of, 141; qualifications of, 141; all members of church-courts, are members as, 219; distinction between, and preachers, 235; not laymen, as distinguished from Ministers, 275, 277; sustain same representative relation to the Church as Ministers, 277; why specially termed representatives of the people, 278; proved to be Presbyters by testimony of the Reformed Churches, 281; argument to prove them not to be Presbyters examined, 281–286; of one order with teaching Elders, 290, 292.

S.

SACRAMENTS, THE, reason of dispensation of being restricted to preachers, 120.
SCHISM, distinction between, and separation, 441, 452, 465.
SCOTLAND, CHURCH OF, testimony of, that Ruling Elders are Presbyters, 281; doctrine of, as to the proper subjects of judicial discipline, 355.
SCOTLAND, FREE CHURCH OF, position of, as to church-boards, 294.
SCOTTISH REFORMERS, doctrine of, as to inferences from Scripture, 256.
SCRIPTURES, THE, perfection of, as a rule of faith and practice, 163, 167; the only law of the Church, 167, 175, 382, 456, 469, 472; the measure and standard of faith, 175; necessary inferences from, of equal authority with, 255: inculcate general truths by concrete cases, 290, 314; only standard of duty, 311; do not condemn slavery, 384, 456, 459, 500; must be supreme in conflicts with philosophy, 393; noble moderation of, 394; relation of the State to, 552; distinction between relations of the State and of the Church to, 553.

SECULAR SOCIETIES, relation of the Church to, 469, 473.
SIN, not only predicable of the individual, but of the State, 521.
SINS, NATIONAL, sermon on, 510; of a State as a member of a confederation, 524; resulting from breach of faith, 525; resulting from a perversion of the organs of government, 533; which are widely diffused, 537; of a State as a particular Commonwealth, 539; of slaveholding States as to their slaves, 542.
SLAVERY, relation of the Church to, 381, 455, 475, 500; not condemned in the Scriptures, 384, 456, 459, 500; sanctioned in the Scriptures, 385, 407, 457; the Christian argument against, largely founded in doubtful philosophical speculations, 389; the Christian argument against, violates the principle that Scripture is its own interpreter, 390; the Christian argument against, inconsistent with commands of Scripture to masters and slaves, 391; opponents of, pervert the Scriptures, 392; nature of, misapprehended, 392, 539, 541; argument against, invalidates the authority of Scriptures, 393; danger to those who join crusade against, 394; the Christian doctrine of, 398; public opinion of the civilized world against, 400; description of crusade against, 401; effects of opposition to, upon apologists for, 401; probable results of agitation as to, 404; real parties to the questions as to, 405; argument against, from the genius and spirit of Christianity examined, 407; first error, as to nature of the, tolerated in letter of Scripture, 408; consistent with personal rights and responsibilities, 410; true definition of, 414; confusion of, with involuntary servitude exposed, 416; moral, described, 416; question whether some of the essential rights of man are not destroyed by, and his perfection hindered by, considered, 419, 460; inconsistent with an absolutely perfect state of society, 420; to be judged of, relatively to an imperfect state, 421; relation of, to the advancement of society, 427; second error, as to the genius and spirit of Christianity in its bearing upon, 428, 457; incidental evils common to, with other relations, 429; is a moral school, 430, 461; argument against, from its criminal origin, considered, 431; duties of the State in relation to, 432; duties of masters in relation to, 433, 542; duty of the Church in relation to, 433, 475, 500; a cause of separation between Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches, 454; views of Southern Presbyterian Church as to, 455; question whether it is essentially a sin, considered, 456; history of, co-extensive with that of the Church, 457; overruled to the spiritual good of the slaves, 460; argument against, from primitive intuitions, considered, 461; argument from abuse of, 500; bad faith of the nonslaveholding States of American Union as to, 530; is an organization of labour, 539; is a displacer of agrarian agitation, 540; sins in relation to, to be guarded against, 542.
SOCIETIES, VOLUNTARY, independent of ecclesiastical control, 146; a great defect of, 174; relation of the Church to secular, 469, 473; must appeal to church-members, not church-courts, 470.
SOCIETY, when justifiable in exercising its primary rights, 535.
SOCRATES (SCHOLASTICUS), referred to, as to relation of Elders to preaching, 122.
SOZOMEN, referred to, as to relation of Elders to preaching, 122.
SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, reasons for separate organization of, 439, 447, 454, 465; recommendations as to organization of, 442; projected on a missionary career, 445; address of, to all churches of Christ, 446; schism disavowed by, 441, 447, 452; position of, as to slavery vindicated, 455; in communion with the Church in all ages, 459, 462; worked for good of the slaves, 459; proposal to employ the Church itself, not societies, for the work assigned her, the only peculiarity of, 463; proposed valedictory letter to the Northern Church, 465.
STATE, THE, province of, distinct from that of the Church, 440, 449, 554; nature and office of, 449, 514; responsibility of, to God as moral Ruler, 514, 519, 521, 550; must have a religion, 515; ought to have the true religion, 516; not bound to have an established Church, 517, 554; Christianity ought to be the religion of, 517, 549; relation of, to the rule of Christ, 517, 549, 551, 555; as Christian need not infringe the rights of those who are not Christians, 518, 554; is a subject capable of sin, 521; is a moral person, and as such responsible, 521, 551, 552; like the individual, responsible to law, 522; like the individual, dependent on the grace of God in the discharge of duty, 523; when magnanimous, 546; relation of, to the Scriptures, 552; the religion of, and of individual rulers may be different, 554; separation of, from the Church distinguished from separation of, from religion, 554.
STATESMEN, are special ministers of God, 546.

T.

TEACHERS, as such, not rulers, 118; Ruling Elders not necessarily, but might be, 118.
TEMPERANCE SOCIETIES, relation of the Church to, 469.
TERTULLIAN, testimony of, as to functions of Bishops, 121.
TESTIMONY, of a party against himself admissible, 308.
THORN, SYNOD OF, doctrine of, as to the subjects of judicial discipline, 353.
TILLOTSON, ABP., fact in life of, 571.
TOLEDO, COUNCIL OF, as to functions of Bishops, 121.

U.

UNBELIEVERS, distinguished into two great classes, 330.
UNITED STATES, THE, structure of the government of, 525; error of the framers of the Constitution of, 550.
UNITY OF THE CHURCH, a fundamental principle of Presbyterianism, 135; as realized by the representative system, a distinctive principle of Presbyterianism, 234; how realized by Rome, 136, 235; as catholic, not necessarily formal and organic, 452.
UNITY OF THE RACE, affirmed, 403, 452, 542.

V.

VAINGLORY, the sin of, 538.
VAN MASTRICHT, doctrine of, as to the subjects of judicial discipline, 360.
VŒTIUS, opinion of, as to baptized nonpro-

fessors, 434; doctrine of, as to the subjects of judicial discipline, 358.

W.

WARBURTON, BP., view of, as to extraordinary officers of the Church, 17.

WESTMINSTER STANDARDS, the standard to Presbyterians for determining offences, 312, 364, 367; authority of, 313, 367; as complete as to morals as they are as to doctrine, 366; not mere inferences from the Scriptures, 366; are a rule of faith and practice, 367.

WHEWELL, PROF., views of, as to slavery, 409.

WILL-WORSHIP, what, 164.

WITHDRAWAL, from membership in the Church, 322, 369.

WLODISLAVE, SYNOD OF, position of, as to the subjects of discipline, 353.

WOOLSEY, DR., ordination of, to the ministry criticised, 25.

WORSHIP, everything connected with, prescribed in the Scriptures, 163; giving, as a part of, 224; elements of, which fall within the discretion of the Church, 248.

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